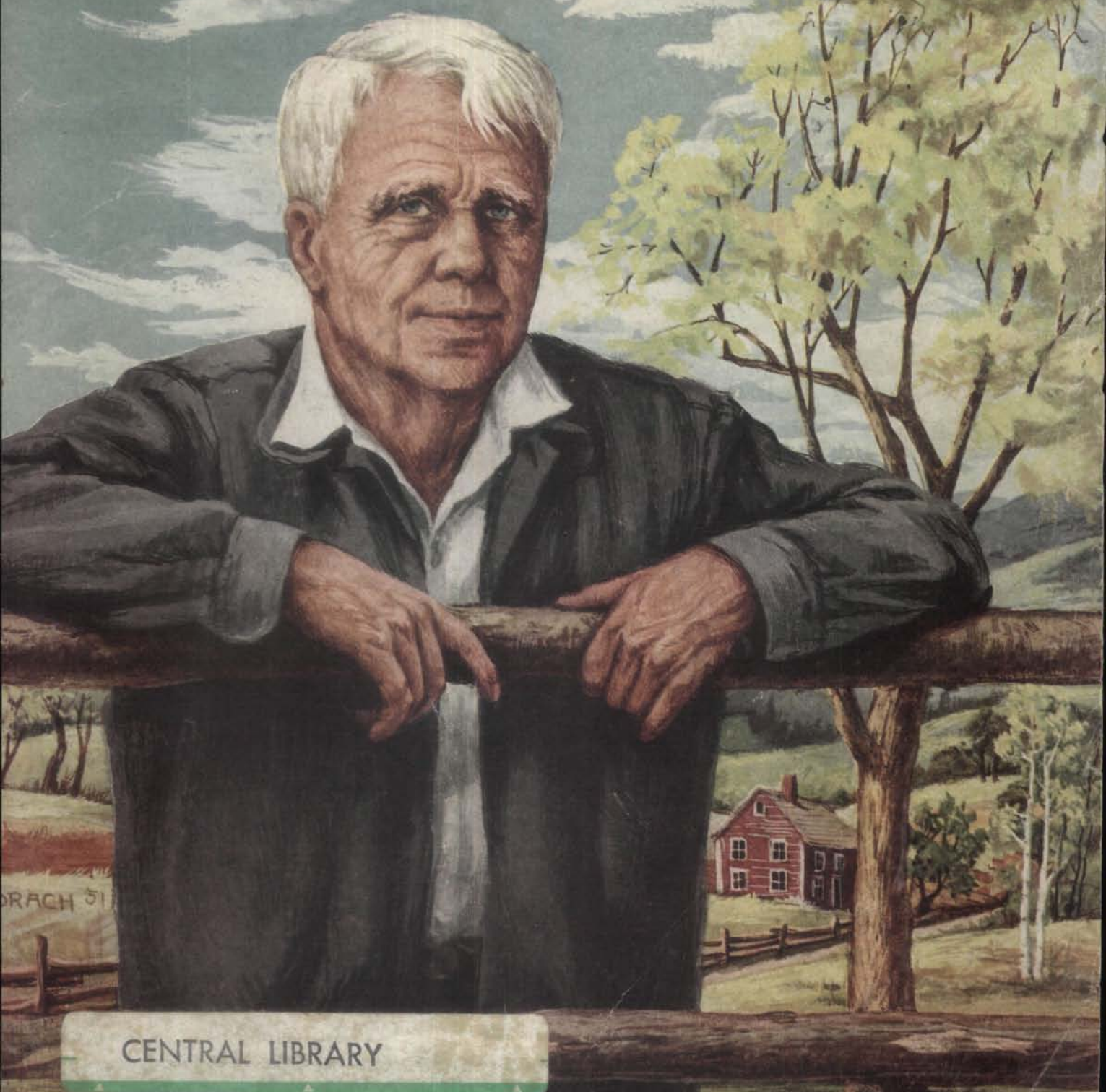


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JUNE 1951

THE *Atlantic*



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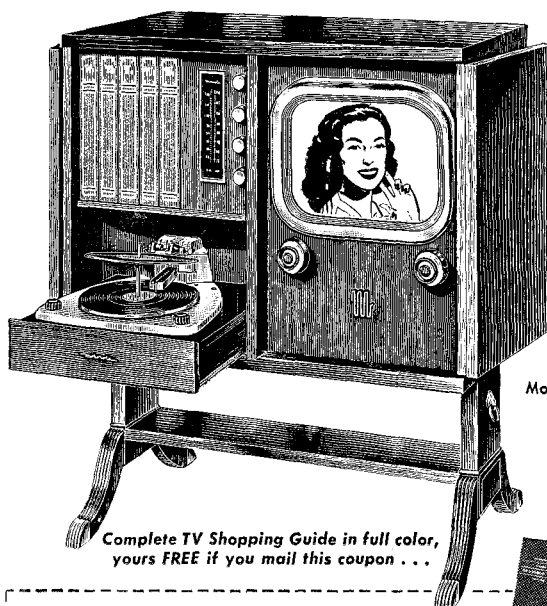
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Washington



WHEN President Truman dismissed General MacArthur he overrode the counsels of caution which swirled around him. The plan most favored was to bring the Supreme Commander home for a last effort to restore harmony. But the President felt that the writing of a letter to an opposition leader, Joseph W. Martin, Jr., favoring a policy diametrically opposed to that of the Administration was unforgivable.

Whether he also felt that he might be put at a political disadvantage if MacArthur were to resign is a question difficult to answer. But, aside from that, Mr. Truman has a respect for the authority of his august office which cannot be gainsaid.

This is not the picture that the public gets of Mr. Truman. He is portrayed as weak, easygoing, addicted to cronyism. He is all of these things, and it is perhaps because of the very softness of his attributes that on so many occasions he has had to show toughness. There is nothing to the manner born about his authority, and that may be why some important officeholders have treated him, to their own discomfiture, with a touch of contempt.

James F. Byrnes, for example, never could get used to the feeling that his chief was no longer the junior Senator from Missouri. General MacArthur was openly contemptuous at Wake Island. He did not salute, indulged in familiar half-patting during their visit together, and did not deign to bring either staff or documents to talk over Far Eastern business.

The impression seems to be given that insubordination can get away with it. Then — wham! Off comes a scalp! Harold L. Ickes, Henry A. Wallace,

Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, Louis A. Johnson, James F. Byrnes, and a lot of lesser luminaries have felt the Truman axe. General MacArthur is merely the latest, though the most illustrious, to wake up suddenly to the impact of Harry Truman as President of the United States.

Mr. Truman's predecessor always handled General MacArthur with kid gloves. To be sure, F.D.R. never relaxed his Hitler-first strategy, and kept MacArthur on shorter rations than the Atlantic theater while the military establishment was building up there. But on questions in conflict with the Navy, F.D.R. continually sided with MacArthur.

MacArthur vs. the Navy

Much of the interservice feuding is still hidden in classified documents. Indeed, MacArthur's war will probably never be objectively written, for he won't allow historians such as Professor Samuel E. Morison access to his information. But enough is known at least to demonstrate that the Navy got the short end of the deal in controversy with MacArthur.

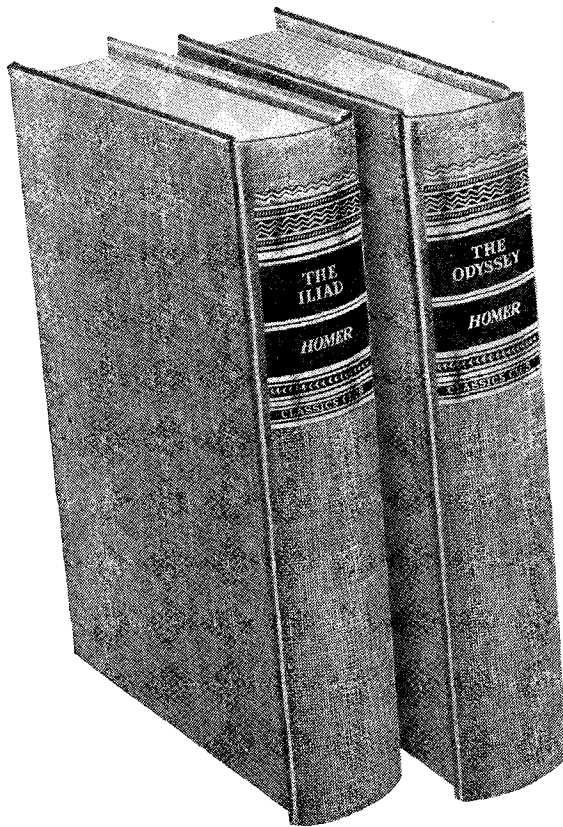
There was the row over priority in respect to the Philippines or Formosa. The Navy wanted to skip the Philippines in the island hop to Japan. If, it was said, Formosa were captured, then the Philippines would die on the vine. This offended the Supreme Commander mightily; "I shall return" had to be redeemed. The argument was resolved in MacArthur's favor in the famous Roosevelt-MacArthur interview at Hawaii.

Then there was the argument over the occupation of Japan. Both the Navy and MacArthur staked out a claim, and MacArthur won. What a

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The Atlantic Report on Washington



lot of history hung upon this dispute! The Navy, which felt that it had brought Japan to its knees long before V-J Day and did not want utterly to destroy Japan, had a more geopolitical approach than MacArthur. It wanted to see Japan restored as an Asiatic power without delay. Admiral Nimitz and his chief of staff, Admiral Forrest Sherman, were conscious of the void that the destruction of Japan would leave in Asia. So they advocated an occupation overseen from the sea.

MacArthur's rival claim appealed to F.D.R. — perhaps because of MacArthur's rival policy. He wanted to put Japan through a wringer of renovation. There was to be no more militarism, and Japan would be given one hypodermic needle after another of New Deal medicine which would enable her to grow into an American democracy.

Military decisions

The crisis has turned attention to the weakness of the civilian establishment in our foreign affairs. In wartime the military managed much of our diplomacy. They arranged with the Soviet Union, over John G. Winant's protests, to leave Berlin as an island in a Soviet sea without insurance of American access. They fixed up the dividing line of Soviet and American occupation of Korea at the 38th parallel. There was not a Far Eastern expert of the State Department at Yalta when Manchuria was virtually handed over to Russia.

This subordination of the civilian in wartime has had ill consequences in peacetime. It has given the civilians a sort of inferiority complex, so that they seem well-content to let our foreign policy be a carbon copy of the strategy worked out by the military.

At the same time the war threw up great military leaders to whom the Administration turned naturally for the tasks of "no peace, no war." General Clay ran Germany, and ran it well. The State Department man attached to him was more an echo than an ambassador. The War Department did not wish to keep the responsibility and wanted to pass it on to the State Department long before the diplomats would accept it. Now a civilian is in charge in Germany — John J. McCloy. But Mr. McCloy, excellent man though he is, has not as much of the proconsular caliber as Clay.

In Japan, of course, MacArthur was a proconsul of the Roman type. State Department representatives served him as minor adjutants, and were not even in the "court" which MacArthur

gathered around him. It was natural for the President to put the soldier General Ridgway in place of the soldier General MacArthur, yet the appointment showed the deterioration of civil supremacy.

The State Department lies low

The handling of the troops for Europe debate showed the State Department at its present disadvantage. There was little departmental activity on Capitol Hill. Indeed, several Senators asked the newspapermen for the identity of the official who had been delegated for this task. Actually it was Adrian Fisher, the Department's legal adviser, but the organ that did the spadework among the legislators was the privately organized Committee on the Present Danger.

Why the apathy at the State Department? The feeling is that Secretary Acheson did not want the State Department to stick its neck out, especially in view of the manner in which the GOP was chewing itself to pieces. But that was no excuse to endanger the proposal to send four divisions to Europe. The vote was carried with an ample 69 to 21 majority, but tagged onto it was the proviso that no additional aid could be sent "without further Congressional approval." With some vigorous work on the Hill, a clarifying amendment might have been carried.

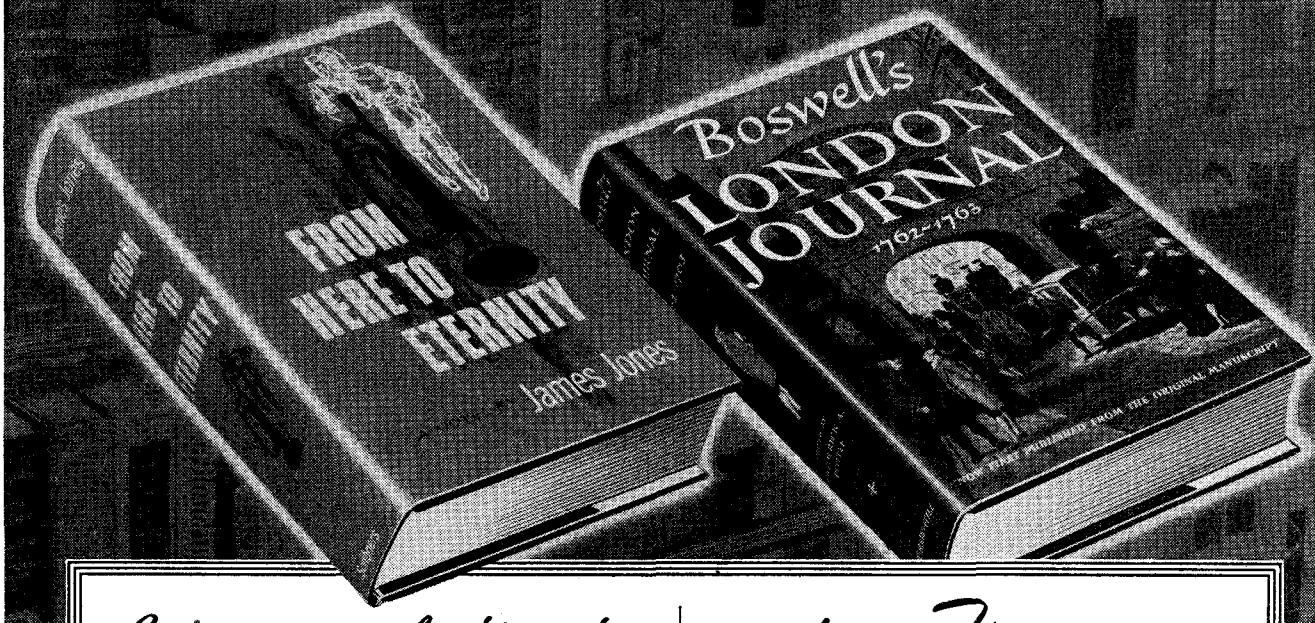
Of course, the proviso is not a law, no matter what Senator Taft says. The Senate cannot curb the legitimate powers of the President on the dispatch of troops. All the proviso does is to confuse both the minds of our allies and our enemies. Partly the fault was the intransigent President's, partly the inactive State Department's. The Senate rapped Mr. Truman's knuckles for his overinsistence upon a strict respect for his constitutional powers.

The President still has to learn the art of working amicably with the legislature in matters in which they have a legitimate concern. If he had pledged continuous consultation prior to the debate, instead of belligerently standing upon his prerogatives, there would have been less emphasis on restriction.

Who is the enemy?

The discussion on troops for Europe did not live up to the advance notice as a great debate. It was for the most part quite petty. The really great debate is now under way on the nature of our adversary. General MacArthur's advent provoked it. The General is a crusader first, last, and all the time, in the medieval tradition.

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If the General had arrived six months ago, he would have found most of our present leaders using his own vocabulary. In vain did the historians show the futility of waging war upon an idea or a social conception. The religious wars proved that. If Russia were overthrown, would communism be overthrown? The answer is that, on the contrary, communism might be more flourishing than ever.

Now the facts of modern times have influenced the semantics of our political leaders. Tito has become almost a friend of ours, though he declares he is a purer Communist than Stalin. Many observers, contrariwise, think that Asiatic communism, though seemingly tied to Stalinism, is by no means pure communism. Thanks to John Foster Dulles, who names the enemy "Moscow-directed imperialism," terms were beginning to be more refined when General MacArthur arrived.

Redeeming the ex-Communists

The repentant Communist continues to engage the interest of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Hollywood seems to have had more than its complement of party members. The amateur psychologist is left to figure out what there is in communism to seduce the artist in Hollywood. Was it the "thing" to do? Was it a kind of compensation for making big money?

The stories that the misguided artists are telling to the Committee are poor commentaries on their intelligence, but the question has arisen as to why, after they have confessed to the FBI, they should be asked to walk the Congressional plank in public?

Actually the FBI does not ask these persons to provide the names of their former cell associates — perhaps because they are known already. It merely affords them hospitality to tell the stories of their victimization. The House Committee, however, insists on full disclosure, and the compliant witness leaves the stand with his morale in partial destruction. It is difficult for him to look his fellows in the face again. As for his employment, this depends upon the studio, which will discharge the man or woman if the case has created sufficient notoriety.

There is no question in most objective minds about the present duty of society toward these ex-Communists, provided they have not violated the law. Society's duty is to redeem them, not punish them. But Communists will never be redeemed if they are to be regarded as pariahs after they have quit the party.

Abroad the redemption of Communists is one of the prime functions of our diplomacy, and when we have promoted deviationism, as in Italy, the victory is celebrated as a victory over the enemy. As a result of these successes, indeed, the Soviet Union, according to the experts, has had to abandon fifth columnism as its prime reliance, and turn to armed force. Surely the same policy should be applied at home. There is just as much merit in helping the Communist here to find the road back to society as in helping the Communist abroad.

Those who think along these lines feel that means should be fostered to help American ex-Communists to get jobs where they are without work, rather than to insure that they will never get jobs, or be fired if they are already employed. F. Joseph Donohue, who prosecuted Harry Bridges, is concerned over this problem. He persuaded half a dozen former Communists having intimate contact with the case to testify in the Bridges trial, but, instead of being grateful, society turned against them. This treatment — and that of the Hollywood artists — is not calculated to promote defection.

Mood of the Capital

The Administration is handicapped in replying to the MacArthur challenge. As to Formosa, all the facts about Chiang Kai-shek's forces are known in detail in the Pentagon, but if they were revealed, there would be a boomerang. Certainly the Nationalists would have a gripe against America for exposing the details of their defenses in full sight of their Communist enemy, and their complaint would be taken up by Chiang's friends in America.

Remember the history of the White Paper. There was initially a holler for the documents, particularly the Wedemeyer Report; but when they were published, there was another holler that the State Department

had injured Chiang by the publication.

Absence of the data leaves the public mind the victim of unofficial estimates of Chiang's strength which are absurdly wide of the mark. Most of them represent mere wishful thinking on the part of Chiang's friends. Chiang is weak, very weak. It is the considered feeling that he would never dream of invading his homeland without "logistical support" from America of the most comprehensive kind. This would mean all-out war. For all intents and purposes, the invasion of the mainland would be American.

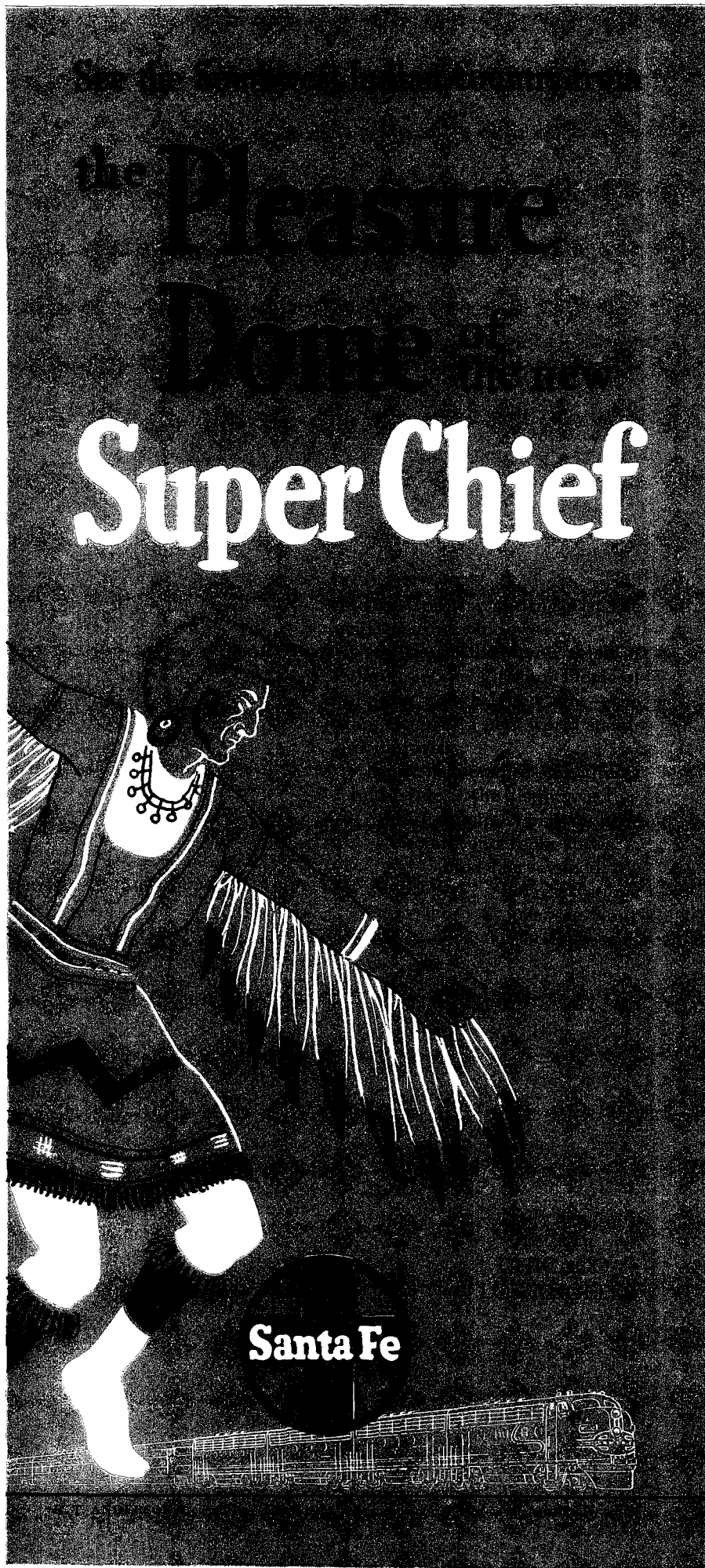
This is the real "Great Debate," and it is bound to go on until 1952. There are those who feel that only a collision with Soviet Russia will end it. At any rate, the temper of Congress and the people is such that there seems little likelihood of any more experiments in "limited war." In this respect, Berlin was successful, as was Greece. Here a success was scored without launching a world war, but an impatience has come over the country.

And it looks as if the next trial will be approached as an all or nothing proposition. It goes against the national grain to fool around with one limited war after another. This is the basis of the political appeal of General MacArthur's point of view — the restiveness over the unfinished business in Korea.

The premium on statesmanship is thus terrific. President Truman saw the country through limited war in Berlin and Greece without difficulty. Now he has to contend with both a psychological condition at home and the burden upon the taxpayer.

For this task he is not helped much by his principal Cabinet members. Secretaries Acheson and Marshall are full of punctilio in their relations with the White House. They follow chain of command in the sense that they are in the habit of leaving the responsibility of decision to Mr. Truman. It was different with Messrs. Hughes and Stimson. They never went to see the President solely with a problem. They carried with them a solution as well. Those who talk about Acheson "dictation" don't know what they are talking about.

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IN INDO-CHINA the United States is supporting a shaky native government erected about the ex-Emperor of Annam, Bao Dai. To see why northern Indo-China is important, you must look at a relief map of southern China. A glance will show a vast natural wall of mountains, stretching from the Himalayas to the South China Sea, which cuts China off from the rest of the world. There are two gaps in this wall. Both are in that part of northern Indo-China known as Tonkin. One, at Laokay, leads to Kunming and the heart of south-central China. The other, at Langson, leads to Canton and the riches of Kwangsi.

These are the historic gates to China, which command the only easy overland routes between China and Southeast Asia. The master of Tonkin is the master of these gates, and can decide which way money, arms, and, above all, ideas shall flow — whether the flow shall be upward, from a Southeast Asia friendly to the Western democracies, or downward from Moscow via Peking.

Whoever controls Tonkin controls not only the direction of this movement but its outlets. From this hub natural overland routes fan out south and west. The spokes of this hub — highways, trails, and caravan routes — cross indefensible frontiers into Burma, Siam, Laos, Cambodia, and Cochin China. With Tonkin in Stalinist hands, there would be no effective way to stop a flood of propaganda, of revolutionaries, or of the arms and money that they use, from engulfing the rest of Southeast Asia. With such a base of operations, it would be only a question of time before Communism rounds out its borders at Singapore, Bangkok, and Rangoon.

How we came to support Bao Dai

The Franco-American policy toward Indo-China is a considered and logical one. Our support of Bao Dai means the support of a democratically-minded native government of the Vietnamese people against a rebellious horde led by known Communists. On principle, we are backing the French colonial army as the only effective force available to fight on behalf of this anti-Communist government. On these premises, our present position became inevitable.

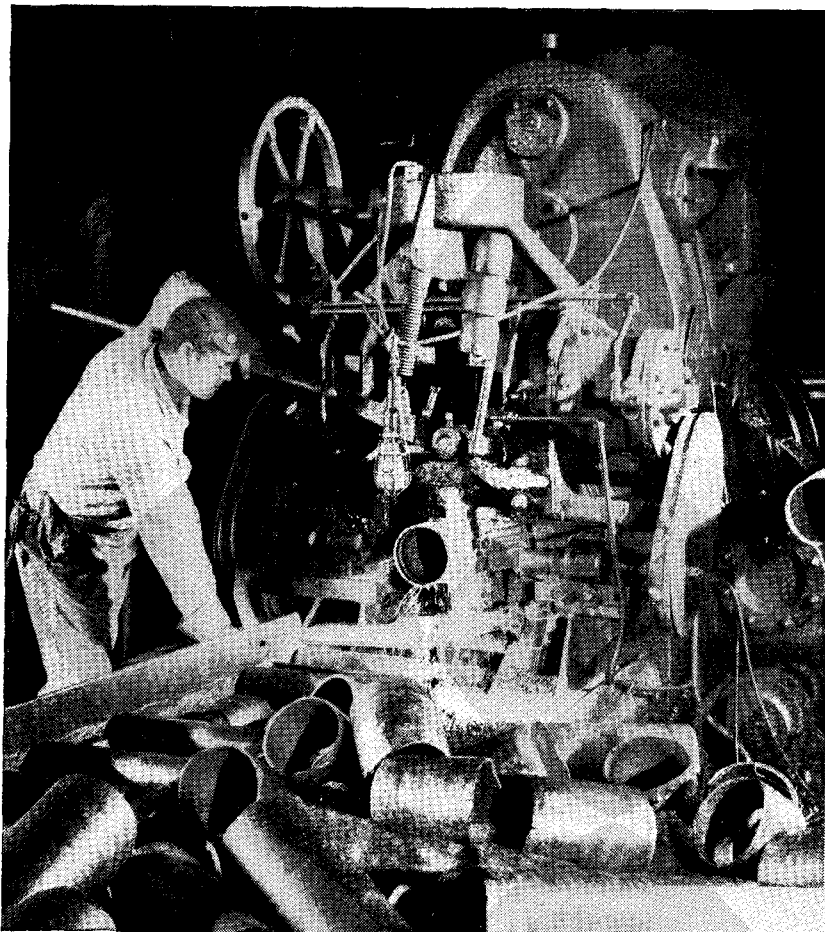
The Franco-American policy has ignored the two most vital elements in the Indo-China of today: the French colonial mentality and the history of the Vietnamese people. The French colonialists refuse to admit the possibility of real independence for a French colony. The historic hatred of foreign domination has led the Vietnamese people to submit to the only leaders tough enough to drive the French out. Those leaders are native Communists.

For eighty years the French regime in Indo-China has faced almost insuperable obstacles. It began with an effort to convert one of the most anti-religious peoples to Catholicism. It continued by trying to bring a people that has been for ten centuries almost pathologically xenophobic under the law and order of Pax Franciscana. During its best period it brought the roads and harbors, the industry and trade, the sound administration and great public health services of Western civilization to a people who cared little about them.

Some of the ablest and most high-minded French of a whole era gave their best for this cause. There were religious leaders like Pigneau de Behaine and explorers like Francis Garnier, followed by generals like Lyautey and Gallieni; governors like Sarraut and Paul Bert; sociologists like Lévy and scientists like Yersin. They brought with them a train of builders, engineers, public health experts, and highly trained administrators who gave enormous energy and devotion to the labor of making Indo-China French. One and all they were greeted with a permanent sullen resistance which burst periodically into a savage, bloody rebellion.

The tragedy of the French position in Indo-China is that such outbursts were, and still are, ascribed to the wicked plotting of a handful of malcontents. The French felt, and still feel, that the great mass of the Vietnamese people are incapable of any progress or of self-government on their own. It is therefore the clear responsibility of France to continue the task that they have undertaken, that of civilizing and governing.

Assuming that the mass of the people wanted nothing better than a sound French administration,

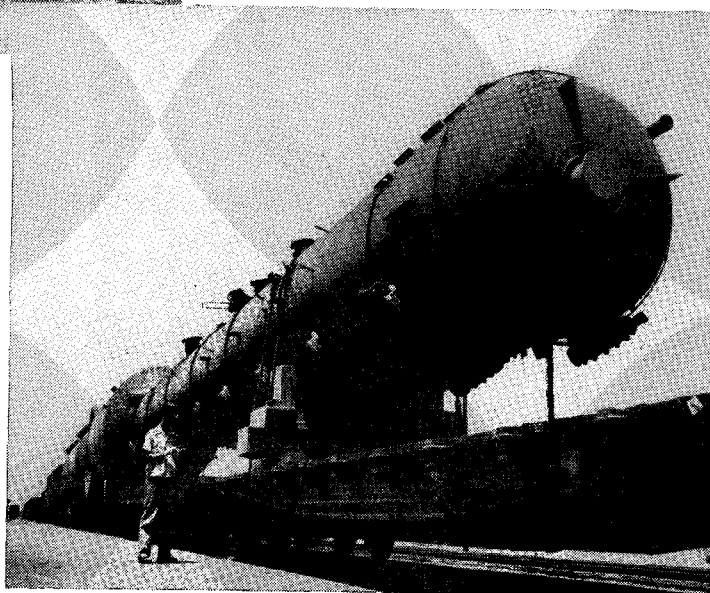
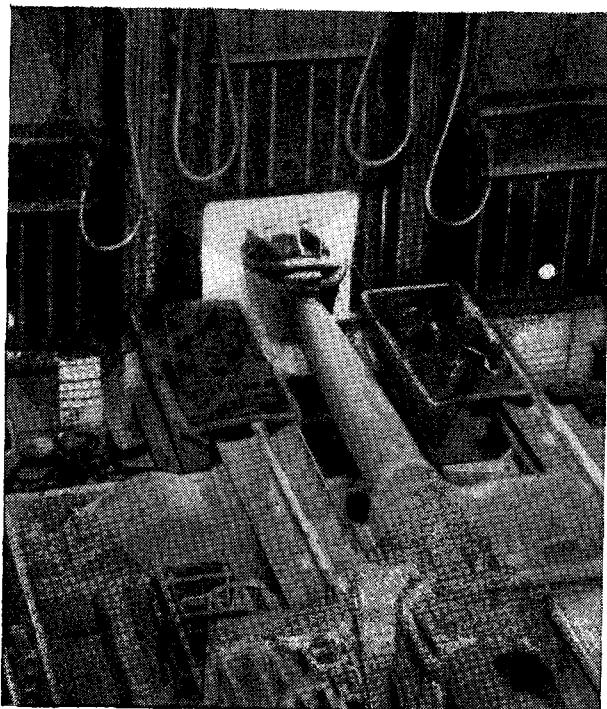


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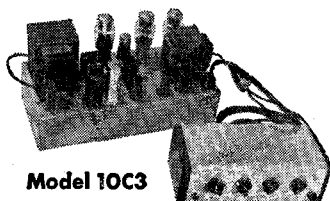
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the French naturally felt that those who opposed the French regime were enemies of their own people, and that any steps taken to frustrate them were thoroughly justified.

To cope with the problem of native subversives, a large and efficient Sûreté was created, which soon had whole jails full of political prisoners. By the early thirties they were so numerous as to overflow into hastily constructed concentration camps and to fill the cell blocks at Poulo Condore, the local Devil's Island. Those leaders who were released or somehow escaped were followed, with inquisitorial zeal, throughout Europe and Asia. It is not surprising that a good many of them wound up in Russia and Red China.

With the Japanese occupation of Tonkin in 1941, many of these escapees returned to organize guerrilla units among their own people. After World War II broke out, more of them turned up at Chungking, demanding and getting modern weapons from the Allied arsenal. By war's end they had created, with the help of political prisoners released by the Japanese, a functioning native government, supported by a well-disciplined guerrilla army. During the Chinese Nationalist occupation of northern Indo-China, elections were held, in which Ho Chi Minh was the overwhelming choice for the presidency.

A condition for the Chinese withdrawal from Indo-China was that this government should be recognized by the French. Pursuant to this condition, Ho Chi Minh went to France, and returned in October, 1946, to his capital at Hanoi with something like dominion status for his regime.

The Communists come in

In Ho Chi Minh's absence there had been a typically Vietnamese parthogenesis, with dozens of small political factions fighting over trivialities. Although the Indo-Chinese Communist Party was officially dissolved in November, 1945, its leaders remained the one cohesive element in the government. As they emerged at the head of the coalition Viet Minh party, many of their opponents disappeared or took off for Nationalist China.

The emergence of this Communist-trained leadership and the internecine struggles which preceded it were regarded by the French colonial experts

in Paris and Saigon as proof that the Vietnamese did not really want, nor were they capable of, self-government; and that the whole Republic of Vietnam was nothing but the scheming of unprincipled Communists. It was with a considerable sense of righteousness, therefore, that they set about destroying it, in spite of the treaties and recognition of a few months before.

A French puppet regime for Cochin China was put on a permanent basis. The French army sent more troops to Tonkin, where tension rose daily between the inept General Morliere and the leaders of the Vietnamese Republic. On December 19, 1946, the fight which both sides had come to regard as not only inevitable but desirable broke out. The Vietnamese felt that the independence could only be wrested from the French by driving them into the sea; the French that their moral and financial investment could be salvaged only by crushing this little gang of Moscow-trained agitators.

During the year that followed, French military leaders were sure that they could easily defeat the lightly armed and economically feeble forces of the Ho Chi Minh government. As one brilliantly planned and skillfully executed operation of encirclement after another failed to produce any decisive result, the heads of French colonels and generals rolled. But the premise remained in Saigon and Paris that an ultimate and final military victory could be achieved.

American aid

By mid-1948, however, Indo-Chinese military expenditures were becoming increasingly burdensome, and American matériel was badly needed. So the Bao Dai formula was devised. As a start, the handful of docile Vietnamese who had been called the Republic of Cochin China were now called a National Government. Spontaneous demonstrations were arranged in all of the French-occupied towns of Indo-China, calling for the return of Bao Dai. The ex-Emperor of Annam was recalled from the obscurity and poverty of a Hong Kong hotel room, given plenty of spending money, and told to lead a crusade. With the help of the French army he was to save his people from Ho Chi Minh and his fellow Stalinists. To help his standing with the Vietnamese and the

outside world, various treaties were signed promising a limited independence to his government.

The Bao Dai government was readily recognized by America and a few other Western powers. Military credits and ECA funds were forthcoming. A United States military mission, headed by a major general of Marines, was flown to Saigon to give Bao Dai advice and prestige. Both the United States and France made every effort to persuade Vietnamese of good will to jump on the Bao Dai bandwagon.

To the shocked surprise of the well-meaning artisans of the Bao Dai formula, nobody jumped. There were no important defections from the Viet Minh-dominated forces of Ho Chi Minh. The important Catholic leader Ngo Dinh Diem steadfastly refused to assume the premiership. Nor would the native Catholic clergy join the crusade, in spite of urgent French representations to the Vatican. Led by India, the non-Communist governments of Asia withheld recognition.

Bao Dai himself was more than a disappointment. Instead of being grateful for his yacht and his chateau on the Riviera, his private plane and ample spending money, he became intransigent. Far from leading a docile native government, he consistently demanded more and better jobs for Vietnamese and a larger till for them to loot. Worst of all, French intelligence soon learned that his closest advisers were staunch admirers of Ho Chi Minh.

The Bao Dai formula has not worked. A shift in December giving the high command to General de Lattre de Tassigny cannot change the basic military situation, for there has never been any lack of brains or leadership in the French army in Indo-China, nor any lack of persistence and courage among the troops.

The plain fact is that the Viet Minh forces, although they have lost battles, and will lose many more, still hold the initiative. This initiative is retained because they can move at will, having the support of the people, through a terrain so rugged as to be virtually impassable to a modern army. The Viet Minh forces are led by men with close ties with Moscow. And a decisive proportion of their arms

are coming from Communist China. A victory for these forces will owe nothing to the free world, but will be deeply indebted to Mao Tse-tung. Peking, if not Moscow, will have a first mortgage on any Viet Minh government established by the force of these arms, even though more than 90 per cent of the people of Vietnam are as anti-Communist as they are anti-Chinese.

A case for the UN

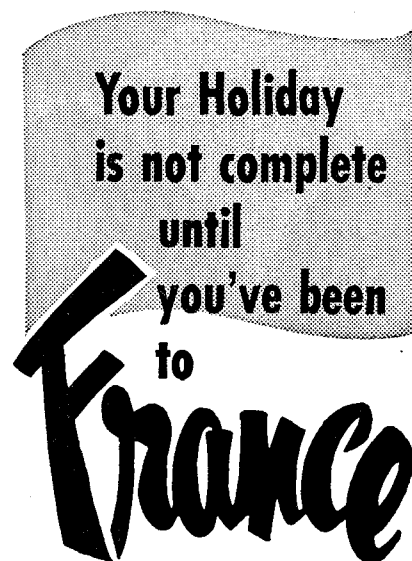
It must be evident that neither we nor the French can spare the vast number of troops or endless equipment needed to subdue 20 million Vietnamese, backed by limitless Chinese arms, fighting on their soil for a cause that they believe in. Furthermore, four years of savage warfare capping eighty years of antagonism and mistrust make it impossible for the French and Vietnamese peoples to find any formula, unaided, for bringing peace to Indo-China.

The only hope of saving Southeast Asia from Communism lies in an enduring peace for Indo-China. There is a price for that peace that will have to be paid. Happily, France has recently indicated that she may be nearly ready to pay that price, which is the relinquishment of her claim to sovereignty over Indo-China.

When this question comes before the United Nations, it will be the task of American statesmanship to see that the impact of such a courageous move on the part of France is not wasted. We must be as ready to urge swift and dramatic action to restore peace to Indo-China as we were to counter aggression with force in Korea.

No one who knows Indo-China would minimize the grave responsibilities that this would lay at the doorstep of the United Nations. The holding of free elections and the creation of a stable government in a country where passions run so high and where political experience is so lacking will be difficult indeed.

But the United Nations, which helped to work out a successful solution for Indonesia and also for Palestine, and which is now engaged in sensitive negotiations with India and Pakistan on the Kashmir question, should be given the opportunity to help break the stalemate in Indo-China.



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London

HIGH over the site of the "Festival of Britain" there is balanced a great silvered cigar-shaped marker known as the *Skylon*, and thereby hangs a topical quip. The magically suspended object is called the Labor Government's most appropriate monument, because it has no visible means of support.

The ebb tide of Labor's popularity has come relatively suddenly. A Gallup poll at the beginning of last winter recorded 46 per cent of the voters sampled as favoring Labor, compared with 44 per cent for Mr. Churchill's Tories. That meant roughly that there had been no substantial change since the general elections. At the end of winter the same poll gave Labor 38 per cent against the Tories' 51 per cent, a very radical change indeed.

In the search for the sources of this rapid decline, most commentators have settled on inflation; for prices began moving upward perceptibly at about the same time that the political sentiment recorded by the polls shifted strongly against Labor. They have continued to move as if in inverse and causal ratio to Labor's popular stock.

Inflation is of course now a world-wide phenomenon because the general competition to buy raw materials for rearmament forces everyone's prices up; so the question may arise, why should the consequences be more severe in Britain than elsewhere? The answer lies in the brittle rigidity of British controls and the tightness of the Labor economy.

As an example of how tight controls in Britain have been, during the world's last big bout with inflation — from 1945 to 1947 — British food prices rose only 2 per cent compared with a rise of 30 per cent in American prices in that period.

But this was done largely by severely testing the trade unions' loyalty to the Labor Government and inducing them to forgo the wage demands that give momentum to a price spiral. Thus the sudden rise of prices this winter due to soaring raw material costs hit here in Britain an organized Labor near to bursting with postponed and pent-up wage demands.

By midwinter, demands for wage increases became irrepressible. Where union leaders attempted to restrain their rank and file they lost control. At one point over 100,000 workers scattered in various key industries were out on illegal strikes. The Government and its wage tribunals had to yield and to junk the amazingly long-lived policy of "wage freeze."

By the end of winter, raises had been granted that amounted to an additional 330 million dollars a year on the national wage bill, and the amount is still rising. An indication of the early effects of this on prices is the *Economist* index of wholesale prices: for a four-week period in January and February it showed a rise of 7 points in Britain compared with a rise of only 2 points in a similar index in roughly the same period in the U.S.

A reputable American reporter recently wrote that "daily soaring prices have all but wrecked Britain's tightly controlled economy." That may be an exaggeration, but it is true that no end to the spiral is in sight; indeed it appears to be gaining in momentum, and thus far the Government has indicated no effective plans for halting it.

The Tories' cold war

Labor politicians are as frank in admitting as Conservatives are in asserting that an election now would bring Labor down. British politicians, however, are aware that no political trend can be trusted beyond the weekend. That is why Mr. Attlee holds on to office desperately in the hope of a change in the winds while Mr. Churchill battles desperately to bring him down quickly in fear of it.

On the economic front, the mood of resignation with which conservative businessmen accepted Labor controls and nationalization measures for five years has gone. Hitherto some of them have even joined Labor's governing boards for socialized industries. But recently when the steel industry was taken over by the Government, the ex-owners and managers not only refused to serve but put pressure on other businessmen not to accept positions on the board. For the first few months of steel nationalization at least, they have succeeded in withholding from the

new governing board the services of a great many technical experts the Government had counted on using.

But it has not been on the political front that the Tories' new mood has been expressed most spectacularly. With disarming frankness, the Conservative M.P. Robert Boothby recently stated in a public speech the tactics his party had adopted in regard to the Government:—

"We shall harry the life out of them. We will make them sit up day and night and grind away until they get absolutely hysterical and say, 'We can't stand any more.' The only way to get rid of them fairly quickly is to try and wear them out. This is what we are going to do for the next two or three months. Division [roll-call vote] after division, and we can do it in squads."

Specifically, the Tory campaign has consisted of two practices: first, the calling of snap surprise votes on any issue that presents itself, in order to force all Labor M.P.s to be at all times in the chamber or within running distance of it; and second, the institution of "prayers," which are Opposition requests for the annulment of routine administrative orders and can be debated endlessly.

The repeated calling of snap votes has given the Cabinet some severe scares. On three occasions in the winter, Labor was caught with its majority down and was defeated by the Tories, and once it suffered a tie and was saved only by the casting vote of the speaker of the House. Mercifully for the Government, all were on minor questions not obliging its resignation.

However, it was the long "prayer" debates into the small hours of every morning that hurt most. The Tories have not sought to keep debates going all night, but only until after the buses stop running; the theory being that since more Tories have automobiles than do Laborites, missing the last bus would mean not getting home at all for the unfortunate Government supporters.

The system has hit Labor where it counts: among its leaders. For some 50-odd of Labor's members have not only legislative duties in the House all evening but also executive duties

Why So Many Decide To BECOME CATHOLICS

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In some cases, they are prominent, even famous people, and newspapers and magazines will interview them to ask: "Why are you adopting the Catholic Faith?" Usually, however, these converts are just average people and nobody bothers to ask them "Why?"

Yet the reasons which prompt the average person to become a Catholic are tremendously impressive. They are worth the most careful study of all who seek the salvation of their immortal souls, and who search for spiritual truth in a world of confusion.

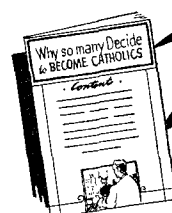
It isn't easy to become a Catholic. It involves more than a mere declaration of faith and regular attendance at a nearby church. Thorough instruction in Catholic beliefs and obligations comes first, and a firm and fervent conviction must be demonstrated. The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance and Holy Communion must follow. And these are only the beginnings of Catholic life and Catholic obligations.

Nobody would undertake to meet such rigid requirements out of mere curiosity, or as a passing fancy. It may be assumed, therefore, that the average person who is thinking of becoming a Catholic has been moved by some strong reasons to feel this way. Is it merely because he has friends and neighbors who are Catholics...because the Catholic Church spans the earth and dates back to the Apostles...because in the Catholic Church there is unity of creed and worship, authority and a distinctive form of ritual?



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The Atlantic Contests for College Students for 1950-1951 (closing date April 9) were open to all students using the Atlantic Monthly in a course during some part of the college year from September 1950 through March 1951.

Essay Contest

PRIZE—\$100.00

Icaria, by John Spanos, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; *Emily G. Irvine*, Instructor

HONORABLE MENTION

Darkness at Noon, by Helen L. Pilley, University of North Carolina; *Phillips Russell*, Instructor

At the Still Point of the Turning World, by Maurice Korman, Brooklyn College, New York; *Catherine M. Reigart*, Instructor

Blake, They Say, Was Mad, by Audrey Ware, Boston University, Massachusetts; *Robert H. Sproat*, Instructor

Story Contest

PRIZE—\$100.00

One More to Make Ten, by Dolores Sagués, Dominican College, San Rafael, California; *Sarah Wingate Taylor*, Instructor

HONORABLE MENTION

Delay Enroute, by Jack K. Svitzer, Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania; *Kathrine K. Taylor*, Instructor

The Letter, by Charles D. Klingler, Indiana University; *Josephine K. Piercy*, Instructor

Poetry Contest

PRIZE—\$100.00

A Water Elegy, by Albert Paris Leary, Centenary College of Louisiana; *Mary Willis Shuey*, Instructor

HONORABLE MENTION

Nativity in the Age of Wars, by Ann O'Hare, Brooklyn College, New York; *Catherine M. Reigart*, Instructor

Dormition of the Virgin by Petrus Christus, by Mary Kathleen Hunt, Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; *Sister Mary Hester*, S.S.N.D., Instructor

Resurrection: The Dance, by Albert Paris Leary, Centenary College of Louisiana; *Mary Willis Shuey*, Instructor

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH OF MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE, Vermont, announces the award of two scholarships covering tuition for the 1951 session of Bread Loaf School of English: one to Dolores Sagués, Dominican College, San Rafael, California (for her story, *One More to Make Ten*), and one to Sarah Wingate Taylor, Instructor of Dolores Sagués

as ministers and junior ministers all day. In addition to many lesser victims of Churchill's parliamentary cold war, Prime Minister Attlee himself has had to be hospitalized for periods with a duodenal ulcer; and exhaustion was also a contributory factor to Ernest Bevin's having to yield the Foreign Office to his fitter colleague, Herbert Morrison. Finally, even the speaker of the House succumbed to sickness due largely to exhaustion.

There have been signs that Mr. Churchill may have overreached himself with these tactics and offended that sixth sense which is so finely developed among Britons — the sense of decorum. A recent Gallup poll, registering a fall in the Tories' popular lead over Labor from 14 points to 12 points, was widely interpreted as a kind of public reprimand, and Churchill thereupon agreed, in an exchange of letters with the Labor leadership, to open "truce talks" on the institution of prayers. The practice of surprise snap votes, however, goes on.

The left-wingers

As if the frontal attack by the Tories were not enough, Mr. Attlee suffers further harassment from the rear by his own back-bench left-wingers. The score or more of resolute left-wing M.P.s have of course always been there. But now that Labor has a majority of only seven seats in the House and is being subjected to a procession of snap votes, the "Keep Left" group, as it is called, from a pamphlet its members once published, possesses the power of life and death over the Government.

Moreover, changed world circumstances since the Korean war broke out are giving the Keep Lefters a popular base they have not had before. The essentials of their credo — that a big rearmament program is not entirely necessary, that the burdens of rearmament financing are not being distributed equitably among the classes, and that Britain is knuckling under too readily to America on too many questions — are proving increasingly attractive to sections of the population caught in the pinch of rising prices.

Finally, a factor that may be in their favor — though it is still too early to make hard and fast judgments — has been the replacement of Ernest Bevin in the Foreign Office by

Herbert Morrison. Morrison stands on the far right of Labor politics, as Bevin did; but Morrison is above all a politician, sensitive to the shifting forces that make friends and influence people, where Bevin was not.

Bevin's first entry into politics came in his middle sixties during the war; he had spent most of his adult life as a union organizer, head of the world's biggest union — the British Transport and General Workers — in a virtually irremovable position, and was therefore in the custom of ignoring trends of political sentiment and respecting the advice of permanent officials, a practice he carried with him into the Foreign Office in 1945.

Though Morrison is expected to undertake no fundamental changes of foreign policy, many think he may be more respectful of the growing billow on the left. Indeed, Morrison's first speech as foreign minister was cheered from the left as being more "reasonable" than anything Bevin had uttered for years.

After a long period of enfeeblement, the left group made known to Attlee (and in fact discovered to its own surprise) its potentialities last autumn in spectacular fashion. The day President Truman was erroneously reported in London as having expressed readiness to use the atom bomb in Korea, the Keep Lefters organized a letter to Attlee demanding his intervention. In two hours that evening more than 100 members of Parliament had signed the letter. It was largely this that catapulted Attlee to Washington for his personal conference with Truman.

On another occasion last winter, the group gave Attlee a reminder of the might of their marginal position. They broke the ranks and carried 32 votes against the Labor Government. Fortunately for the Cabinet, the Tories chose not to take part; but had they done so, Labor would have been out. Since then, Attlee has not been able to ignore the left group in his policies, and this may have been largely responsible for the repeated disagreements with America over policy in Korea and in Asia generally.

The Attlee Government had another narrow escape at the end of April, when Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Labor, and Harold Wilson, President of

the Board of Trade, resigned in protest over the amount budgeted for rearmament. The Tories forced Attlee's hand at once with a "prayer" to annul a Government order raising transport charges, and Labor squeaked by with a vote of 297 to 293.

Too many Americans

The Keep Left group has been charged with being the source of the wave — fairly gentle but none the less deserving of special notice — of anti-American feeling now current in London. But it would be more accurate to say that a trend of mild anti-Americanism exists and that this group is the leading exploiter of it, though both the orthodox Laborites and Mr. Churchill's Conservatives have not been above drawing a little domestic political capital from it on occasion.

The real source of the wave has been simply the way things have happened lately. For one thing, the formal end of Marshall aid — of dependence on America — was announced. In speeches to constituents Labor politicians now almost invariably place high among their party achievements the fact that "we got rid of" Marshall aid. Charitable American observers here consider it may be simply a reflex impulse of a rather proud people to twist the eagle's tail feathers for a spell after such an event.

Secondly, people here feel America has been unduly callous toward British sensitivities in claiming the higher appointments of the Atlantic Defense organization. After one American had been made supreme commander of the Atlantic armies and another (William Herod) chief of its Defense Production Board, it was held a supremely unkind cut that a third American should be named head of the Western world's naval forces in the Atlantic.

When this appointment was made known it caused a rare storm in the House of Commons, Churchill riding it against Labor for all it was worth. His thunder was echoed in the press throughout the land, and so aloof a figure as the Archbishop of Canterbury made a public appeal that the appointment should be reconsidered. Some weeks later, editorialists won some consolation, and claimed a corroboration of their prejudices against American admirals, when the Oxford-Cambridge boat race had to be rerun because the Oxford craft humiliat-

ingly sank at the start; for the first time in history, the Oxford crew was piloted by an American coxswain.

But probably the chief source of the wave has been the course of American policy in Korea. This factor first became operative with the Truman atom-bomb report referred to earlier. The corrected version of the President's statement came too late to remove the impression created in London that America was making vital decisions binding on Britain without consulting her. Professor Arnold Toynbee's apothegm, "No annihilation without Representation," was taken over by the left-wing periodicals as a national rallying cry.

Before the suspicions aroused by that incident had died down, General MacArthur's series of pronouncements, left unrepudiated by any correctives from the State Department, gave them new and more vigorous life. All this explains the Labor Government's relief when General MacArthur was removed.

There have been signs that both big political parties may try to turn anti-

Americanism to use in the coming election campaign. This spring, when a long international tariff conference was being wound up in Torquay, the Tories staged a mass rally near the conference hall to blast the Labor negotiators for allegedly having "sold out" to America and cut British imperial preference tariffs. Next morning, the official Labor paper, *Daily Herald*, which is generally prudent almost to a fault in its comments on things American, carried in triumphant denial the front-page bannerline, "Labor Britain Stands Up to America."

For Americans, however, it is wise to keep this wave of hostility in its proper proportions. Like all things else it is relative; and the par stock of the U.S. to which it must be related now stands so high (as a result of the wartime alliance and Marshall aid, which Britons resent only on the surface) that the present slight deviation from it should not be taken over-seriously. There is virtually no questioning of the fundamental necessity of the alliance; and individual to individual, the British are as polite and warm to us as they have ever been.

ESTAB. 1830

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Repartee

LETTERS TO AND FROM THE EDITOR

Europe's Universities

After a year as visiting lecturer to universities in Western Europe, Perry Miller found that many educated Europeans cling to misconceptions and outworn stereotypes about the United States. The source of these attitudes, he felt, was the universities themselves, and he said so in an article in the March *Atlantic* entitled "What Drove Me Crazy in Europe." So much comment followed from our readers that we are giving over these columns to some of their letters, and we regret that more space is not available for the many others we received. — THE EDITOR

SIR:

I have been for some weeks in Washington, representing my country, Holland, on commodity meetings of the North Atlantic Pact countries. Recently I read Professor Perry Miller's interesting article.

In our government we may have too many university graduates; however, for the insider they are not so alike as one might think. And standardization from the North Sea to the Mediterranean? I do not believe there is much similarity between the universities of different nations — not in the programs and not in student life. But Europeans everywhere might ask an American the same questions, just as many Americans ask the same questions in Europe, and so give the impression of uniformity.

I am a metal and steel merchant at Rotterdam, and represent several American companies. I enjoy your American writers, and I read regularly your best sellers — the language,

style, and character description of your contemporary American writers are fresh and original, and I believe in general better than our contemporary books. The same with plays. Most theaters in Holland give translated American plays, and they are quite good.

H. G. J. REYNVAAN
% Republic Steel Corporation
New York City

SIR:

As I am endeavoring to study the American educational system, I was very much interested in Professor Miller's reactions to the present status of education in Europe as contrasted with the American scene. I am not acquainted with education in the southern European countries, but the years I have spent as a student in my home country, Norway, and my travels in Sweden and Denmark have convinced me of the truth of many of his evaluations.

Compared with present trends in America, the curricula are stagnant and traditional. Furthermore, the aspect of articulation between high school and university has been neglected, as has been the very important function of guidance, vocational and educational.

I have not found, however, that "the universal apathy of European students toward the future of Western culture is direct and fundamental." The students of Western Europe were leaders in the underground resistance movement during the period of Nazi occupation. Since the cessation of hostilities we have witnessed the leadership of students in the movements for the condemnation of

the Franco regime and the Kremlin. The student participation in the election campaigns further proves the point. Students eagerly participate in municipal campaigns and efforts, welfare drives, and other kinds of community coöperative enterprise.

KJELL SKYLLSTAD
Walla Walla College
College Place, Wash.

SIR:

I am an American who was born and reared in Europe and I have always been interested in the misconceptions of Europe about the U.S. and vice versa. Professor Miller's article seems to me to be full of typical American misconceptions and clichés.

I believe the American system of higher education has many happy features — the friendly relations between teacher and student are a particularly attractive one; also, the students usually have a good time, the boys make useful contacts, the girls find husbands, there are pleasant extracurricular activities for all.

But the average college graduate is still an illiterate. He has learned writing, but he is unable to compose a letter without the help of a dictionary. He has learned to read, but he rarely reads anything after leaving school and confines himself to the comics, where he is aided by pictures. He supposedly knows arithmetic, but he is unable to solve the simplest equations or figure out percentages. His knowledge of American history consists of snatches like "Father, I cannot tell a lie" and "Damn the torpedoes!" And of course he knows no foreign history at all because he

has been taught that foreigners are "fossilized."

By comparison, the European graduate is a prodigy of learning. He has received a very thorough grounding in languages, arts, and sciences in high school, so the university is not expected to provide him with a general education. I know a European university seems grim compared with our colleges; but judging by the finished product, they don't do so badly.

JOHN MAASS
Los Angeles, Calif.

SIR:

In the Continental system the avowed purpose of the university is not to produce gentlemen, citizens, or humanists, although the end products are often all three; it concentrates upon the training of scholars and specialists. In other words, the Continental university is a graduate and professional school, and any just evaluation of it in American terms must be on the graduate level.

In some respects, pedantry and academic isolation are more prevalent in our American graduate schools than in Europe. The European student is borne along by a cultural tradition which encourages him to buy and read books outside his narrow field, and it is notorious that European students participate in politics to an extent which would terrify our oath-ridden administrators.

Admittedly, there is a wall between the professor and his classroom, but I never met a European professor, while I was teaching at the University of Oslo, who rejoiced in it. "If only I had time to know my students" is a familiar wail everywhere. Give professors a decent income and reasonably small classes and the ancient relationship between *magister* and *discipulus* inevitably revives. European professors are pitifully underpaid and most of them have to supplement their income by hack work for publishers who want to use their names. Much student diffidence is a courteous effort to avoid wasting the poor man's time.

FRANK G. NELSON
Long Beach State College
Long Beach, Calif.

SIR:

I think that the root of the misunderstanding between Europe and America is to be found in the old antagonism between empiricism and rationalism — between Anglo-Saxon

empiricism allied with American pragmatism, on the one hand, and European (chiefly French) rationalism, on the other. Europeans believe in the necessity of imposing a priori laws, rational rules and definitions, from the outside, on a rebellious and chaotic reality, while Americans prefer to respect the spontaneity of the becoming and the originality of life.

Europeans run the risk of fossilization, and have not always escaped it. But for Americans there is a danger just as great — namely, instability and insecurity. All the Europeans that have come to the United States have been struck by the restlessness, the rootlessness, of Americans. *Peace of Mind* would never be a best seller in Europe.

The excessive intellectualism, the rationalism, which Professor Miller accuses European universities of propagating is not at all the monopoly of a small corps of dry-minded graduates — far from it; it is the most widespread thing in Western Europe. One finds it in the most illiterate peasants. What does a French mother, for instance, say to a naughty child? "*Sois raisonnable!*" How would you translate that into American?

Do Americans want to know the reason for Europe's anti-American prejudices? Well, our universities have nothing to do with it. Our prejudices spring from a very base motive: we are sordidly jealous of your material wealth. That's all and it accounts for everything.

ROGER M. ASSELINEAU
Cambridge, Mass.

SIR:

I found Professor Miller's article revealing, stimulating, and — since I am a European university graduate — slightly irritating. My main reaction, however, was a feeling of gratitude towards my own teachers, Paul Ehrenfest at Leiden and others at Copenhagen, who followed a system entirely different from the one Professor Miller described — perhaps slightly exaggerating but on the whole correctly.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Five weeks' notice is necessary to effect changes of address. Please give old as well as new address, preferably supplying actual address label from your copy. Send all changes to THE ATLANTIC, 8 Arlington Street, Boston 16, Mass.

My chief activity is that of Director of the Philips Research Laboratory at Eindhoven. At present I am a visiting professor at Princeton (my company gave me a leave of absence for one term so that I could accept the invitation). In the course of my work I have to deal with many people — university graduates and others — from many parts of the world and I should find it interesting to compare my observations with Professor Miller's.

I want to express my appreciation of your publishing this article. It has given me — and undoubtedly many others — ample food for thought. And that is one of the main purposes of a good magazine.

H. B. G. CASIMIR
Palmer Physical Laboratory
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

SIR:

I am a European "intellectual" who came to the United States to complete my education. Ten years ago, I took a summer course in American Colonial Literature under Professor Miller at the University of Michigan.

The problem which bothers me most is the following: What aspects of American culture are exportable and how can they be exported? I have had endless discussions with friends at Yale, and we have not been able as yet to get an answer. Professor Miller's article has wonderfully conceived suggestions to which I shall give a good deal of thought.

GUY S. MÉTRAUX
Hamden, Conn.

A Correction with Apologies

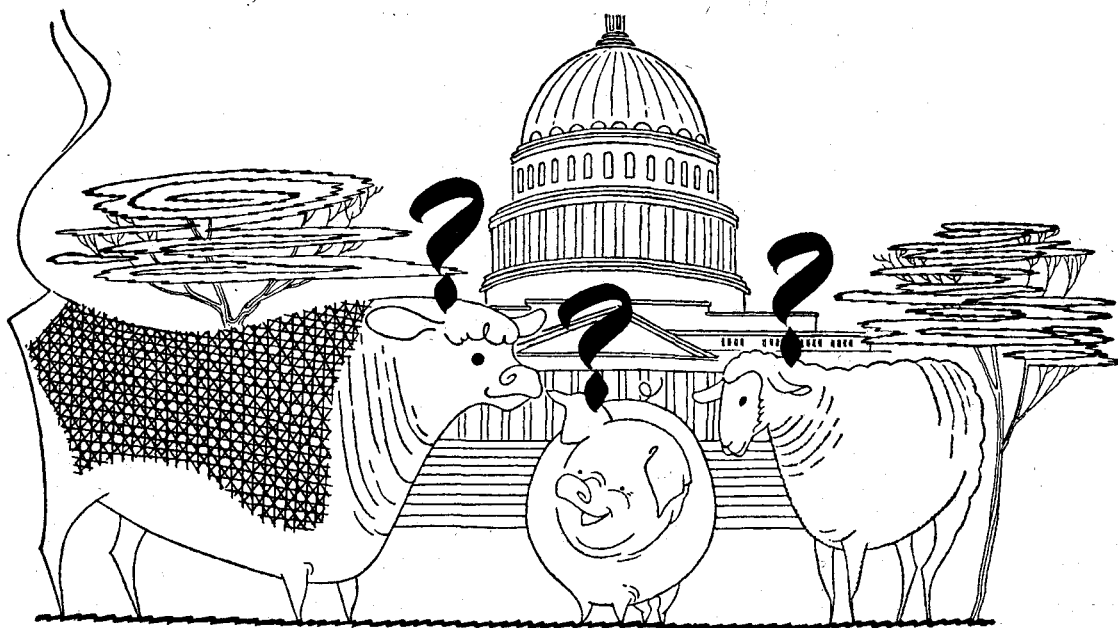
SIR:

I was shocked to read on page 71 of your good magazine for April that the *Chicago Daily News* "is this month closing up its London office."

As executive editor of the *Daily News* I am charged with responsibility for the foreign service. I can assure you that neither Mr. Knight nor I have any intention to close our London office or any other foreign office.

Because we have the largest client list of any American newspaper foreign service, this statement could be very damaging and I must ask you to do everything possible to correct this misstatement.

BASIL L. WALTERS
Executive Editor, *Chicago Daily News*
Chicago, Ill.



Common sense ... and the Price of Meat

In addition to general inflation all along the line, one reason why meat prices have advanced, like others, is that supplies have not increased as fast or as much as the amount of money millions of wage earners now have to spend. They all want more meat ... much more.

The common-sense remedy for prices is stabilized consumer income and an expanded production of meat, which already is on the way. People should have all the meat they want at prices as low as production costs permit. But to get more meat, livestock production must be *encouraged*. This is not an overnight job. Nature requires time to grow meat animals to marketable size.

Then, too, farmers and ranchers say livestock production will be *discouraged* by continuance

of man-made regulations designed to set aside the law of supply and demand. Nobody ever has been able successfully to repeal that law in a free country.

Government price and rationing controls, no matter how well meant or how efficiently administered, are no guarantee for the future in the fight against inflation. In fact, Washington stabilization officials have said controls must be *temporary*; that we should be rid of them as *quickly as possible*. Every control leads to more. OPA experience proves that the result is the chaos of black markets run by chiselers and hoodlums. That means less and less meat in legitimate channels of trade at a time when we may need it most for our armed forces and civilians as well.

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THE BALANCE OF MILITARY POWER

ANONYMOUS

THE balance of military power is a variable which changes from day to day. There is no living expert who can call the exact turn. The best one can do is to add up the known and the probable and, since it is always clarifying to look back, one can arrive at a plausible estimate of what that balance has been over the past five years and what it is now.

From 1945 until midsummer 1949 the military world was dominated by two factors. The first was the American monopoly in atomic weapons and an air force capable of projecting those weapons against the industrial vitals of Russia. The second was a Russian ground army so much more powerful than all other ground armies of the world that it constituted an equivalent Russian monopoly of ground power sufficient to dominate the land mass of Eurasia.

These two monopolies in effect canceled each other out, because while neither could conquer the other, each possessed the ability to injure the other terribly, and the amount of potential injury each could do was, in conjecture, equal. It would not have served the power interests of either to launch a war, for if the Russians launched it with their ground armies the United States could wreak terrible retribution upon the industrial centers of Russia; whereas, if the United States launched it with its atomic weapons, the Russians could retaliate by seizing continental Europe and thus cut the United States off from its commercial, cultural, and military associations with Western Europe. We could have maimed each other but we could not destroy or conquer each other. Therefore the world of 1945 to 1949 existed in a state of military equilibrium which was precarious and dangerous but none the less a state of equilibrium which neither dared to disturb.

In the summer of 1949 two events threatened to

tilt the balance in favor of the Soviet Union. The first was the fact that the Russians had succeeded in achieving an atomic explosion. The second was the triumph of Communist armies in China. Those events did not immediately change the balance. There would have to be a lapse of time before Russia could convert a single atomic explosion into a stockpile of atomic bombs sufficient to diminish the military value of the stockpile that the United States had been accumulating since July of 1945. And it remained to be seen in late 1949 what degree of influence Moscow would gain over the new Communist regime in China. There was a possibility worth testing that the new Chinese government would take its foreign policy from at home even though it took its political and economic philosophy from Stalin.

However, the grim fact impressed itself upon the men responsible for the security of the United States in Washington that the military equilibrium of the first four and a half post-war years was being undermined. The possibility stood forth starkly that at some indefinite but approaching day in the future Russia would attain the capacity to injure the United States so seriously that we might not recover from the blow. There was a further possibility that Russia might command the land mass stretching from the China Sea to the Elbe, and from the Indian Ocean to the Arctic Sea — a land mass which could ultimately give its masters a sufficient base for perpetual military domination of the world.

The test of the foreign policy of the new Chinese regime was made on January 12, 1950, by an offer of peace contained in the speech Secretary of State Acheson delivered before the National Press Club. The results were immediate — and negative. China imprisoned American consular officers, mistreated

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American missionaries, launched a violent propaganda campaign against the United States, and began military preparations directed at Korea, Formosa, Indo-China, and Tibet. Plainly China had decided to join hands with Moscow and to attempt to exploit with Russia the twin advantage of the Russian bomb and its own civil war victory in China.

But before China's rejection of the American peace offer, Washington had taken the first steps to counteract the threatened imbalance in the military equation. In October of 1949 the policy and planning staffs of the State and Defense Departments and the National Security Resources Board began an exhaustive re-examination of the problem of Soviet Russia and of America's relationship to Russia. The study resulted in a document known as National Security Council #68. This document charted the long-term project of restoring the threatened equilibrium and of inducing Russia, some day, to abandon its outward pressures and become a tolerable neighbor in the world.

While this study was going forward, research into military uses for atomic energy other than the bomb was intensified; the expansion of United States and allied ground forces was charted; expansion of the American radar warning net was pushed to the limit of available funds; the decision was taken (January 31, 1950) to seek the hydrogen bomb; and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization moved towards the idea of a unified armed force under a single command.

No one can say what would have come of these projects if the North Koreans had not marched south on the 25th of June, 1950. Until that day "economy" was still the official slogan of both the Administration and the political opposition in Washington. But the North Korean attack was made. Under the impact of that attack the Congress did authorize many, although as yet not all, of the projects contemplated in NSC #68. June 25, 1950, converted abstract plans into physical projects. The United States and its allies began in many and vigorous ways to attempt to check the deterioration in the military balance and to regain a stable equilibrium.

Substantial progress has been made since the Korean war began. Last November there were seven American divisions in Korea. Those seven divisions represented roughly two thirds of the total organized and equipped ground strength of the United States. In November those seven divisions were struck a surprise blow for which they were not prepared. For a time the possibility existed that our force might be destroyed or captured. Today the divisions in Korea represent roughly a third of the total ground strength of the United States. They have become an asset to, rather than a net drain upon, the over-all military strength of the country. There is a flow of battle-trained veterans back to the

training bases. The army in Korea itself has come through the ordeal of defeat. Its combat morale and efficiency, the organization of its supply system, its defenses in depth, its air and sea support, have all been improved. Its commanders are confident that they can get that army out of Korea safely even if Russia were to join the battle.

A real breeding of strength has been taking place throughout the whole area of American remobilization. A weakness in the American military posture through 1950 was the existence of several points where serious damage might have been done by surprise hostile action. There was a single assembly line for B-36 bombers. There was only one armored division. New weapons were being produced in only a few army arsenals. There never was and never will be an American Achilles' heel, but an enemy seeking to injure the warmaking capacity of the United States would have to strike many more targets today than in 1950. Assembly lines for planes, tanks, guns, and radar have been multiplied and dispersed. This is an incidental to the process of building capacity to sustain a long war. By 1952, if present projects are completed, the United States will have the capacity to produce 50,000 military aircraft a year. The capacity to produce in all other areas of weapons is being expanded correspondingly.

The military value of America's present and potential allies has expanded during the Korean war period. The prowess of Greeks and Turks on the Korean battlefields and the steadiness of Yugoslavs in the face of attempted intimidation by satellite neighbors have extended plans for the construction of a "southern flank" for Europe. The welcome victory which French forces won in Indo-China in December, 1950, against the Viet Minh armies of Ho Chi Minh came into the balance.

It was accidental, but none the less welcome, that the winter of 1950-51 saw the spread of a schism in the world Communist movement. The effect of this schism on the military balance cannot be measured even approximately. One only knows that Moscow no longer controls a monolithic Communist Party totally loyal to its orders. To some unmeasurable extent this is compensation for the alliance between China and Russia.

These elements of improvement in the American position since the outbreak of the Korean war tend to reduce Russia's domination of the area of ground power. However, since 1945 the heaviest single factor on the Allied side of the military balance has been the American lead in atomic weapons.

2

STRENGTH in the area of atomic warfare depends primarily on three factors. They are (a) the possession of stockpiles of atomic bombs, (b) the ability to deliver those bombs against enemy targets, and (c)

the ability to defend against enemy bombs. Examine the relative position of the two sides in each of these three categories.

The numbers of atomic bombs in American and Russian stockpiles are the most closely guarded secrets of the two governments. Yet the probable magnitude of the two stockpiles is not as great a mystery as is generally believed. There is knowledge in the public domain which permits a calculation derived from what we know of the rate of American production in 1945 at the beginning of the atomic age. We know that the first atomic bomb was exploded at Alamogordo on July 16, 1945. We know that Bombs Two and Three were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 11, 1945. We know that when number Three was dropped on Nagasaki it was the last one the United States possessed at the time. We know further that the plans for the invasion of Japan in November of that same year called for three bombs to support each of three main landings. That is, we know that the United States had the capacity to produce at least nine atomic bombs between August and November of 1945. We can assume, therefore, that the initial rate of production of the American industrial economy was a minimum of three per month. If the United States had maintained only its initial rate of production over the intervening period it would possess today (June 1, 1951) a stockpile of 210 atomic bombs minus the number exploded in subsequent tests. However, there have been many statements to the effect that the technique and speed of production has been increased since the initial experimental stage. The statement has been made, and not contradicted, that the United States possesses today somewhere between 750 and 1000 atomic bombs. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of this as a measure of the general magnitude of the American stockpile.

The same reasoning can give us an approximation of the Russian stockpile. If one assumes that the Russian atomic bomb industry was constructed on a scale comparable to the American, then the Russians, who exploded their first bomb in mid-summer of 1949, must today (June of 1951) have a minimum of 63 atomic bombs. It seems reasonable, and only safe, to assume that they have been able to increase their rate of production after nearly two years in the business. To be safe against disastrous surprise America must assume that the Russian stockpile may run as high as 200 atomic bombs.

Thus we begin our measure of the relative atomic weapons strength of the two sides with an assumed ratio of at least four to one in favor of the United States in numbers of atomic bombs in stockpiles. The present ratio could be to our advantage by ten to one. We may take five to one as a fair working formula.

The first conditioning factor on the usefulness of the stockpile is the ability to deliver the bombs to

targets in an enemy country. Guided missiles with atomic war heads may eventually replace the bomber with its crew of human beings as the vehicle. Such missiles are available now for the distances which would be involved in war in Europe. Russia would be vulnerable to them around her outer boundaries. Britain and France would not be safe from them unless the Russian army could be kept east of Germany. But the intercontinental rocket is still well in the future. So far the only means by which American atomic bombs could be dropped deep inside Russia, or Russian atomic bombs dropped deep inside the United States, is by bomber.

The United States has a present lead in bombers. The American B-36 is the only bomber known to exist which is capable of two-way operation between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. It is conceivable that somewhere in the vastness of Russia the Russians have built intercontinental bombers comparable in size and performance to the B-36. We cannot rule out the possibility since the Japanese were able to build whole battleships secretly previous to the last war. A new bomber would be easier to conceal in Russia than a battleship in pre-war Japan. However, to the best of our knowledge the Russians have nothing better yet than the TU-4 — an imitation of the American B-29, the "Superfortress" of the last war. The Russians are known to be working on a jet intercontinental bomber.

The U.S. Air Force already regards its superior B-36 as semi-obsolete and is going into production by the end of this year on its successor — the B-52 all-jet heavy bomber. These planes will have the range to fly from U.S. bases to targets anywhere in the U.S.S.R. and return to home base nonstop. The United States has three types of medium bombers capable of carrying atomic bombs to Russia by using overseas bases. These are: the old B-29; the B-50, which is a modernization of the B-29; and the B-47, which is an all-jet plane.

The backbone of the Russian bomber force is still the TU-4. This plane has a range of about 4000 miles. The Russians are believed to have between 400 and 500 of these planes. The Russians have recently extended the runways of their airfields in Eastern Germany. We must presume that they have done the same with runways in the Murmansk area of European Russia and on the Chukotoski peninsula at the northern tip of Siberia. They can reach any point in the United States from these three areas by one-way bombing. From the Chukotoski peninsula they can reach the northwest corner of the United States with the TU-4 and return.

A second controlling factor is the number of targets which must be hit in order to do vital injury to the opponent. American industry, communications, and transportation are less vulnerable than Russian in the sense that there are more elements at more

widely scattered places. There is only one Trans-Siberian Railway. There are many transcontinental American railways. Russia's oil comes largely from Baku. American oil comes from a dozen states as widely separated as Pennsylvania and California, Texas and Wyoming. It is a fair estimate that to do a given amount of damage Russia would have to hit three times as many targets in the United States as we would have to hit in Russia.

On the other hand, Russian pilots would probably find targets more easily in well-charted America than American pilots could find them in Russia, particularly that part of Russia beyond the line of farthest German advance. Also, the Russians could become less vulnerable by further conquest if that could be done without general war. Capture of Middle East oil would reduce their dependence on Baku and give us more oil targets to have to hit to make a strategic bombing operation effective.

To summarize the evidence so far: the United States has many more atomic bombs at this time, better planes with which to deliver them, and fewer targets which must be hit to achieve a decisive effect. However, the Russians could reach any point in the United States with their existing heavy bombers, and they possess something up to 200 atomic bombs. There is not the slightest reasonable doubt that in the event of war the United States would have to sustain a heavy attack of atomic bombs.

The last major factor in the atomic bombing equation is ability to protect against the bombing attack. We are told that while the United States has been building television sets the Russians have been building a radar screen. There is some truth in this and it has been useful towards arousing American public opinion to the dangers inherent in the situation. But the factories which have been pouring out TV sets in the United States also provide a broad industrial base for radar defenses. Probably there is more nearly equality in the development of a radar warning net in the two countries than in the other two areas. The United States has its embryonic net protecting the most vital areas of the country, just as Russia does. American planes skirting the borders of Russia have maintained a constant check on the development of the Russian defenses, as the Russians have on the American net. Evidence would indicate that the ability to detect an approaching attack is about equal on both sides. The same applies in the area of interceptor fighters. The best defense against atomic attack is the radar screen plus the jet interceptor. Both sides have modern jet interceptors. It is doubtful that either side has the advantage in radar warning or jet interception capacity. Given the determination, American factories could turn out radar sets and jet interceptors faster than the Soviet Union.

Antiaircraft artillery is another element in de-

fense against atomic attack. Less is known about Russian progress here. It may be substantial or negligible. American progress is substantial. The proximity fuse has been wedded to the self-tracking gun. The guided ground-to-air missile would play a part in any new war. We can be certain that not all the Russian planes which took off for America would drop their bombs on the intended target.

3

THE time may come when the elements in aerial defense will reach such a peak of development that aerial bombing by piloted planes will cease to be profitable militarily. However, that time is not here, or even remotely in sight. At present the bomber is still ahead of the radar screen, the interceptor plane, and the antiaircraft gun. A majority of the big bombers would deliver their bombs at or near the target. The accuracy of American bombing should be higher than of Russian, but there is no proof that it is. The U.S. Air Defense Command hopes to bring down or divert 30 per cent of the planes in an enemy bombing attack. This would be under ideal — and unlikely — conditions. The air defenders will feel that they have done all that could reasonably be expected if the score is 10 per cent. The Strategic Air Command hopes that nine out of every ten U.S. bombers which cross the Russian frontier will get home safely after dropping their bombs on target, but is prepared for heavier losses.

Thus the weight of the atomic blow which the United States is able to deliver on Russia exceeds the weight of the atomic blow which Russia is able to deliver on the United States. If we use the working ratio of five to one for numbers of bombs in stockpiles, and the ratio of one to three for numbers of targets which must be hit to achieve decisive results, and include in our calculations that the United States is much better off than Russia in facilities for two-way as opposed to one-way bombing, it follows that if it came to atomic war at the present time the United States would be able theoretically to deliver a blow from which the Russian industrial, transportation, and communication systems could not recover. On the other hand, the United States probably could pick itself up off the floor after receiving the Russian blow and regain its war-making capacity although it would be hurt cruelly.

The United States could deliver an initial blow as hard as the total potential Russian blow. And such an initial American blow could be repeated four or five times, or more, depending on the actual size of the two stockpiles.

However, Russia does have atomic bombs and Russia has the ability to deliver her atomic bombs on targets in every part of the United States. Each Russian bomb delivered on or near target would do

relatively the same amount of damage to the United States that a thousand blockbusters of World War II type were able to do on Germany and Japan.

There can be no absolute certainty that the American atomic blow would put Russia out of the war even though it should inflict a crippling blow on Russia itself. The Russian ground forces probably still possess the capacity to overrun Europe even though Russia herself is devastated. They could do this from existing stockpiles of ammunition and equipment and by living off the land of conquered countries. The Russian high command might even attempt to transfer its headquarters out of Russia and carry on a war of sorts trying to use non-Russian factories and non-Russian Communists as replacements for what had been lost in Russia.

In all reason the United States will maintain a numerical lead over the Russians both in numbers of atomic bombs and in the quality of planes with which to deliver them. Russia is of course at the same time increasing the weight of the blow which it can strike at the United States.

4

THE greatest dangers to the United States inherent in this situation do not derive from the fact that Russia is increasing the absolute weight of its atomic blow. The old equilibrium which existed before 1949 is gone. It can never be restored in its original form. The ability the United States possessed before 1949 to deliver an atomic blow from a base immune to the same kind of blow ended with the first Russian atomic bomb. That particular kind of immunity can never be regained. However, it was not that immunity to retaliation in kind which made our atomic weapon a deterrent before 1949. If our bomb was a deterrent to Russia before 1949, it continues to be a deterrent today, for our blow can and will be able to do mortal injury to Russia so long as we retain the capacity to use it, no matter how many bombs and bombers the Russians themselves obtain. What changes is Russia's rising ability to retaliate in kind. There is no diminishment of our power to injure Russia. At present, at least, that power is rising.

Our greatest immediate danger is that through laxness the Russians might find a moment when they could hit us without being hit in return. We have our bomb pointed at them. They have theirs pointed at us. The man who threatens me with a gun is not likely to pull the trigger if he knows that my gun will kill him at the precise moment he shoots. He might pull the trigger if I dropped my gun, or if he could knock it from my hand. The only presently visible way by which the Russians could knock our gun from our hand would be by destroying most of our bombing planes on the ground through a combination of political action, sabotage, and surprise attack.

The longer danger to the United States — the danger which appears to be overlooked in the MacArthur concept of American strategy — lies in the possibility that the Russians might undermine our system of overseas alliances. This could be fatal, because the alliances are the foundation of our atomic striking power. If that striking power could be applied to the full, independently of alliances, then it would be militarily possible for the United States to base its security on its own citadel. But that is not the case. It is true that without secondary overseas bases our B-36 bombers, and the future B-52 bombers, could reach targets in Russia and return to the United States with the aid of refueling devices. But these planes cost as much as a light destroyer. They are incredibly complicated to operate. It takes years to train a crew. Only the best human material is suitable and there is a limit to the quantity available. These big bombers do not come in thousands as did the "Flying Forts" of the last war. You count them by the tens. And while in theory they can operate without secondary bases, in practice the rate of attrition without such bases probably would be exorbitant.

Thus the bulk of the Strategic Air Command Mission must rest on the medium bombers (B-29, B-50, B-47). These planes are dependent on secondary bases. The only useful secondary bases owned outright by the United States are those in Alaska. All the others — Saudi Arabia, Africa, Germany, France, Britain, the Azores, Iceland, Canada, Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines — derive from our alliances. The alliances are as essential to the success of the SAC Mission as are the bombers. One without the other would be meaningless.

Failure on our part to balance out Russia's ground strength at least as fast as Russia balances out our atomic strength could be just as fatal, although less immediately so, as damage to the system of alliances. The two are of course related closely. The United States alone is not capable of producing ground strength equal to Russia. The only possible way the Russians can be balanced out is by the organization of an Allied army based on a population comparable to that of the Russian bloc. That brings us back again to the urgency of alliances. The controlling consideration here is that if Russia can maintain her relative superiority in ground strength while at the same time narrowing the gap in atomic striking power, the time comes when the Russian land army becomes the decisive weapon in the military balance.

These considerations explain the prime concentration of Russian foreign policy on the effort to break up the Western alliances. They also explain the constant harping of Russian propaganda on our system of air bases. If a combination of satellite aggressions, Communist fifth columns, and synthetic Russian-inspired "neutralism" could break up the

American system of bases, then the SAC Mission would become unachievable. Russia in that event would have obtained effective immunity from the American atomic bomb — would have “outflanked” our atomic lead.

5

THE reverse of this proposition contains the key to our own ultimate security and tranquillity. If we can retain our superior immediate striking power with our atomic weapons and at the same time find the means to outflank Russia's ground power, then the time will come when the military balance will shift decisively to our advantage and it will no longer be either safe or possible for Russia to challenge the coalition of free countries. The way to such an “outflanking” of Russian ground power is by broader and stronger alliances. Military power rests upon territory, raw materials, industry, and population. Ultimately, the broader base sustains the greater power. Russia's apparent long-term strategy is to broaden her base while avoiding war. At present we are beginning to check the broadening of the Russian base. Since Korea the Western system of alliances has grown stronger, not weaker. The question over the long term — the next ten years, the next half century — is whether we will succeed in holding together an alliance possessing a broader base in territory, raw materials, industry, and population than do the Russians.

There is a possible immediate application of these “breadth of base” factors which cannot be overlooked. While it seems implausible that the Russians would deliberately choose war now in view of the weight of the blow which SAC could, and would, deliver, we must include in our calculations the possibility that the Russian leaders are prepared to hit now rather than risk the ultimate decline of their cause and frustration of their purposes.

At the present time, when Russian ground strength is not yet equalized or neutralized, it is a theoretical possibility that the Russian army could sweep outside its home areas and sustain itself indefinitely on the fields and factories of countries it could capture quickly and which we would be extremely reluctant to bomb. This sort of thing has never been done successfully on a large scale. In effect, it was Hannibal's attempted strategy against Rome. We must, however, recognize that any sudden deterioration in our system of alliances would give this strategy a dangerously high chance of success. Suppose that “neutrality” should become dominant in the British Commonwealth and South America. Suppose that Communism should sweep through Japan and the Philippines. Suppose that the Russians could manipulate these developments to accord with a sudden sweep of Russian armies across Western Europe. If the price of such advances were the destruction of Russian home in-

dustry it is a price which the leaders of Russia might be willing to pay.

The only sure protection against either the long-range possibility of Russia attaining a stronger base for her military power or of attempting a wartime strategy of shifting her base from home to foreign soil is the system of alliances which can retain for America the broader military base. Here is where the swift revival of American sea power since Korea makes a difference in today's equation. Our overseas secondary air bases depend on our alliances. An alliance is a two-way bargain. A country certain to be overrun in event of war will be understandably reluctant to grant base rights which would invite retribution after an occupation. A country possessing reasons for thinking it can prevent an occupation by Russia will more willingly grant base rights for the use of American bombers. American sea power is the weapon which can bring support to a country such as Turkey which is of first importance to the success of an aerial attack on Russia. Bases in Turkey might make the difference between the success or failure of aerial attack on Russian oil supplies. The United States and Turkey are discussing an alliance which would guarantee base rights in Turkey to the U.S. Air Force in the event of war. This possibility is the product partly of increased American confidence in Turkish military prowess, partly of increased Turkish confidence in the ability of American sea power to maintain sea communications to Turkey and thus to assure to Turkey at least a flow of arms and ammunition.

There is still more immediate importance to this factor. American sea power is a device which can reduce the present importance of Russia's ground strength in the military equation. *Red Fleet* has charged that the United States and Britain are preparing offensive war against the Black Sea coast of Russia. *Red Fleet* is well informed though it gives a false twist to the facts. The British and American navies do not contemplate an exclusive role of running cargoes to Britain in the event of war. They have never been accustomed to playing passive roles in wartime. In the event of a war with Russia both contemplate, and have plans for, extensive operations against Russia from the Arctic, the Baltic, and the Black Sea — but most vigorously from the Black Sea. War in Europe would by no means be just a matter of the Russian army striking for the English Channel and a Western army trying to halt it at the Elbe or Rhine. General Eisenhower's plans call for a bigger and more complex operation. He is doing his best to organize the defense of Elbe or Rhine. He and his staff planners also think in terms of flank pressures which would reduce the force which Russia could project against Elbe or Rhine.

Much is made of Russia's capacity to mobilize 300 divisions for war. That is an awesome number. Obviously, if 300 or even 200 Russian divisions could reach the Rhine some of them could also sweep

on to the Channel. But Russia dares not commit its entire ground army to such an operation. American submarines know their way through the Dardanelles, and their way into the Baltic. Granted, it would only be in the final victorious stages of a war that cruisers, battleships, or aircraft carriers would penetrate those inland seas. But there are smaller and faster ships which could enter them. Commando raids on the Russian Black Sea coast would be feasible from the opening week of a war. There is potential defection in the Ukraine. Perhaps risings could be stimulated. Whether that happens, even light raids on the Black Sea coast would cause Moscow to give thought to her southern front. Russia must protect herself against a repetition in modern form of the diversion which the Western allies projected against that same front in the war of 1854-56 when an Anglo-French expedition landed in the Crimea and caused Moscow to abandon its designs upon Constantinople. The lesson of the Crimean War is not forgotten in London or Washington. We may be sure it has not been overlooked in Moscow.

American air and sea power could bring aid to the Finns, who, in the event of a general war, would be conducting guerrilla operations against the northern flank of Russia. There would be possibilities for landings along the coast of Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. We still have some friends in those countries in spite of liquidations and enforced migrations.

Actually, if war came soon the Russians would start not with their full, ultimate 300 divisions, but with their first line of 175 divisions. By the time they had taken suitable precautions for their many frontiers, their supply and communication lines, and the "loyalty" of their satellites they would probably not be able to put more than 100 on the Elbe. Of those, not above 75 and more probably only some 60 would reach the Rhine. That is why General Eisenhower talks of making Western Europe defensible with some 60 Western divisions.

6

THE immediate problem facing Western military leaders is the problem of how to pen the Russian army inside the Russian frontiers. When and if this problem can be solved we can look into the future with considerably more composure than at present. At that time the Russians would be deprived of any serious prospect of being able to sustain a long war outside of Russia regardless of atomic attacks upon their home bases. They would also be deprived of the prospect of the long-term broadening of their military base.

The possible answer to this problem must be a complex of many factors. The "new weapons" are

important as one means to the perfection of a European army which could withstand the Russian ground assault. The recoilless cannon firing the shaped charge, the atomic artillery shell, self-aiming artillery — these and many more can be a part of the answer. One important component missing at present is adequate tactical air support for ground forces. When TAC — Tactical Air Command — comes into its own alongside of SAC, we will be nearer the day when we can see Europe strong and defensible. We will also be nearer the day when we can consider our system of alliances proof against Russian military threats, diplomatic subversion, Communist infiltration and propaganda.

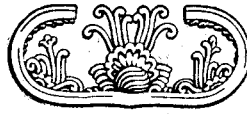
What we are driving for now is a system of alliances which can (1) prevent Russia from eliminating the present system of secondary air bases upon which our atomic striking power rests, (2) prevent Russia from securing a long-term military base adequate for military domination of the world, and (3) give to the United States and its allies a clear and continuing ability to win a war against Russia.

At the present time we are holding against the Russian effort to expand her long-term military base. The Russians have been checked in Europe since the capture of Czechoslovakia in 1948. The Chinese Communists have not yet succeeded in gaining provinces outside of China proper.

At the present time we are holding our system of secondary bases and the alliances upon which they rest. In fact we are gaining in this area of our military power.

We certainly have the possibility of gaining consistently over the Russians in all areas of military power except atomic striking power. We gain there in the absolute, but not relatively. They are bound to creep up on our lead. The question is whether we can generate sufficient compensation in the other areas in time.

Of course it remains to be seen how far we will convert our possibilities into realities. Our very will is a basic factor in the military balance. Like every other factor it is a variable. There is nothing static in the balance of military power. To keep and to improve our present military position we must constantly search for, and find, new weapons and new techniques in the air, at sea, and on the land. To keep and to improve our military position our diplomacy must hold all the allies we have today, and find us new ones. In order that our diplomacy may keep present allies and find us new ones, our social and economic policies must help, not hinder, the friendships we would keep and gain. Finally, our moral position must attract, not repel. The security of the Republic depends on constant gains in every field of power — and in this kind of power race an ethical point can be as weighty as a new weapon.



AND ALL WE CALL AMERICAN

by ROBERT FROST

COLUMBUS may have worked the wind
A new and better way to Ind
And also proved the world a ball,
But how about the wherewithal?
Not just for scientific news
Had the Queen backed him for a cruise.

Remember he had made the test
Finding the East by sailing West.
But had he found it? Here he was
Without one trinket from Ormuz
To save the Queen from family censure
For her investment in his future.

There had been something strangely wrong
With every coast he tried along.
He could imagine nothing barrener.
The trouble was with him the mariner.
He wasn't off a mere degree;
His reckoning was off a sea.

And to intensify the drama
Another mariner Da Gama
Came just then sailing into port
From the same general resort,
But with the gold in hand to show for
His claim it was another Ophir.

Had but Columbus known enough
He might have boldly made the bluff
That better than Da Gama's gold
He had been given to behold
The race's future trial place,
A fresh start for the human race.

He might have fooled them in Madrid.
I was deceived by what he did.
If I had had my way when young
I should have had Columbus sung
As a god who had given us
A more than Moses' exodus.

But all he did was spread the room
Of our enacting out the doom
Of being in each other's way,

And so put off the weary day
When we would have to put our mind
On how to crowd but still be kind.

For these none too apparent gains
He got no more than dungeon chains
And such small posthumous renown
(A country named for him, a town,
A holiday) as where he is
He may not recognize as his.

They say his flagship's unlaid ghost
Still probes and dents our rocky coast
With animus approaching hate,
And for not turning out a strait
He has cursed every river mouth
From fifty north to fifty south.

Some day our navy I predict
Will take in tow this derelict
And lock him through Culebra Cut,
His eyes as good (or bad) as shut
To all the modern works of man
And all we call American.

America is hard to see.
Less partial witnesses than he
In book on book have testified
They could not see it from outside —
Or inside either for that matter.
We know the literary chatter.

Columbus, as I say, will miss
All he owes to the artifice
Of tractor-plow and motor-drill.
To naught but his own force of will
Or at most some Andean quake
Will he ascribe this lucky break.

High purpose makes the hero rude:
He will not stop for gratitude.
But let him show his haughty stern
To what was never his concern
Except as it denied him way
To fortune-hunting in Cathay.

He will be starting pretty late.
He'll find that Asiatic state
Is about tired of being looted
While having its beliefs disputed.
His can be no such easy raid
As Cortez on the Aztecs made.



ROBERT FROST is the most distinguished living American poet. He was born in San Francisco, where his father, a New Englander with strong sympathies for the South, named him after Robert Lee. His mother was a teacher, and after her husband's death she and young Robert moved back to Lawrence, Massachusetts, where he was graduated from the high school. He studied for a time at Dartmouth and at Harvard; he worked in a Lawrence mill, as a schoolteacher, in a shoe factory, as a small-town editor, and finally as a farmer. But his inner dedication was to poetry, and in England in 1912 his first book of poems, *A Boy's Will*, won immediate recognition for its fresh, quizzical American character. In his poems he speaks for the country at large; for three decades, he has talked and read to college students, and these remarks from his Notebooks show the glint of his philosophy.

POETRY AND SCHOOL

by ROBERT FROST

WHY POETRY is in school more than it seems to be outside in the world, the children haven't been told. They must wonder.

The authorities that keep poetry in school may be divided into two kinds, those with a conscientious concern for it and those with a real weakness for it. They are easily told apart.

School is founded on the invention of letters and numbers. The inscription over every school door should be the rhyme A B C and One Two Three. The rest of education is apprenticeship and for me doesn't belong in school.

The chief reason for going to school is to get the impression fixed for life that there is a book side to everything.

We go to college to be given one more chance to learn to read in case we haven't learned in High School. Once we have learned to read the rest can be trusted to add itself unto us.

The way to read a poem in prose or verse is in the light of all the other poems ever written. We may begin anywhere. We *duff* into our first. We read that imperfectly (thoroughness with it would be fatal), but the better to read the second. We read the second the better to read the third, the third the better to read the fourth, the fourth the better to read the fifth, the fifth the better to read the first again, or the second if it so happens. For poems are not meant to be read in course any more than they are to be made a study of. I once made

a resolve never to put any book to any use it wasn't intended for by its author. Improvement will not be a progression but a widening circulation. Our instinct is to settle down like a revolving dog and make ourselves at home among the poems, completely at our ease as to how they should be taken. The same people will be apt to take poems right as know how to take a hint when there is one and not to take a hint when none is intended. Theirs is the ultimate refinement.

We write in school chiefly because to try our hand at writing should make us better readers.

Almost everyone should almost have experienced the fact that a poem is an idea caught fresh in the act of dawning.

Also that felicity can't be fussed into existence.

Also that there is such a thing as having a moment. And that the great thing is to know a moment when you have one.

Also to know what Catullus means by *mens animi*.

Also to know that poetry and prose too regarded as poetry is the renewal of words.

Emotion emoves a word from its base for the moment by metaphor, but often in the long run even on to a new base. The institution, the form, the word, have regularly or irregularly to be renewed from the root of the spirit. That is the creed of the true radical.

Emotions must be dammed back and harnessed by discipline to the wit mill, not just turned loose in exclamations. No force will express far that isn't shut in by discipline at all the pores to jet at one outlet only. Emotion has been known to ooze off.

Better readers, yes, and better writers too, if possible. Certainly not worse writers as many are made by being kept forever at it with the language (not to say jargon) of criticism and appreciation. The evil days will come soon enough, and we shall have no pleasure in them, when we shall have dried up into nothing but abstractions. The best educated person is one who has been matured at just the proper rate. Seasoned but not kiln dried. The starch thickening has to be stirred in with slow care. The arteries will harden fast enough without being helped. Too many recent poems have been actually done in the language of evaluation. They are too critical in spirit to admit of further criticism.

And this constant saying what amounts to no more than variations on the theme of "I don't like this and I do like that" tends to aesthetic Puritanism. "For goodness' sake," said one teacher to a class, "write for a change about what you are neither for nor against." When one bold boy asked if there could be any such thing, he was told he had flunked the course.

The escape is to action in words: to stories, plays, scenes, episodes, and incidents.

Practice of an art is more salutary than talk about it. There is nothing more composing than composition.

We were enjoined of old to learn to write now while young so that if we ever had anything to say later we would know how to say it. All there is to learning to write or talk is learning how to have something to say.

Our object is to say something that *is* something. One teacher once said that it was something at once valid and sensational with the accent on both. Classmates punish us for failure better than the teachers by very dead silence or exchanging glances at our expense.

One of the dangers of college to anyone who wants to stay a human reader (that is to say a humanist) is that he will become a specialist and lose his sensitive fear of landing on the lovely too hard. (With beak and talon.)

Another danger nowadays to sensitiveness is getting inured to translations. The rarity of a poem well brought over from one language into another should be a warning. Some translation of course in course for utility. But never enough to get broken to it. For self assurance there should always be a lingering unhappiness in reading translations.

The last place along the line where books are safely read as they are going to be out in the world in polite society is usually in so-called Freshman English. There pupils are still treated as if not all of them were going to turn out scholars.

The best reader of all is one who will read, can read, no faster than he can hear the lines and sentences in his mind's ear as if aloud. Frequenting poetry has slowed him down by its metric or measured pace.

The eye reader is a barbarian. So also is the writer for the eye reader, who needn't care how badly he writes since he doesn't care how badly he is read.

It is one thing to think the text and be totally absorbed in it. There is however an ascendancy in the mood to spare that can also think ABOUT the text. From the induced parallel current in the mind over and above the text the notes are drawn that we so much resent other people's giving us because we want the fun of having them for ourselves.

A B C is letters. One Two Three is numbers — mathematica. What marks verse off from prose is that it talks letters in numbers. Numbers is a nickname for poetry. Poetry plays the rhythms of dramatic speech on the grid of meter. A good map carries its own scale of miles.

For my pleasure I had as soon write free verse as play tennis with the net down.



Poet and critic, MARK VAN DOREN has been connected with the English Department of Columbia University ever since he received his Ph.D. there in 1920. An inspiring teacher, he saves his summers for his writing. He is the author of ten volumes of verse; he has edited the Oxford Book of American Prose and an impressive Anthology of World Poetry; and in 1939 the publication of his Collected Poems brought him the Pulitzer Prize.

ROBERT FROST'S AMERICA

by MARK VAN DOREN

I

ROBERT FROST has been discovering America all his life. He has also been discovering the world; and since he is a really wise poet, the one thing has been the same thing as the other. He is more than a New England poet; he is more than an American poet; he is a poet who can be understood anywhere by readers versed in matters more ancient and universal than the customs of one country, whatever that country is. Frost's country is the country of human sense: of experience, of imagination, and of thought. His poems start at home, as all good poems do; as Homer's did, as Shakespeare's, as Goethe's, and as Baudelaire's; but they end up everywhere, as only the best poems do. This is partly because his wisdom is native to him, and could not have been suppressed by any circumstance; it is partly, too, because his education has been right. He is our least provincial poet because he is the best grounded in those ideas — Greek, Hebrew, modern European, and even Oriental — which make for well-built art at any time. He does not parade his learning, and may in fact not know that he has it; but there in his poems it is, and it is what makes them so solid, so humorous, and so satisfying.

His many poems have been different from one another and yet alike. They are the work of a man who has never stopped exploring himself — or, if you like, America, or better yet, the world. He has been able to believe, as any good artist must, that the things he knows best because they are his own will turn out to be true for other people. He trusts his own feelings, his own doubts, his own certainties, his own excitements. And there is absolutely no end to these, given the skill he needs to state them and the strength never to be wearied by his subject matter. "The object in writing poetry," Frost has said, "is to make all poems sound as different as possible from each other." But for this, in addition to the tricks any poet

knows, "we need the help of context — meaning — subject matter. That is the greatest help towards variety. All that can be done with words is soon told. So also with meters. . . . The possibilities for tune from the dramatic tones of meaning struck across the rigidity of a limited meter are endless. And we are back in poetry as merely one more art of having something to say, sound or unsound. Probably better if sound, because deeper and from wider experience."

Frost is one of the most subtle of modern poets in that department where so much criticism rests, the department called technique; but the reason for his subtlety is seldom noticed. It is there because it has to be, in the service of something infinitely more important: a report of the world by one who lives in it without any cause to believe that he is different from other persons except for the leisure he has given himself to walk about and think as well as possible concerning all the things he sees; and to take accurate note of the way they strike him as he looks. What they are in themselves is not to be known; or who he is, either, if all his thought is of himself; but when the two come together in a poem, testimony may result. This is what Frost means by subject matter, and what any poet had better mean if he expects to be read.

Frost is more and more read, by old readers and by young, because in this crucial and natural sense he has so much to say. He is a generous poet. His book confides many discoveries, and shares with its readers a world as wild as it is wide — a dangerous world, hard to live in, yet the familiar world that is the only one we shall ever have, and that we can somehow love for the bad things in it as well as the good, the unintelligible as well as the intelligible.

Frost is a laconic New Englander: that is to say, he talks more than anybody. He talks all the time. The inhabitants of New England accuse one another of talking too much, but all are guilty to-

gether, all are human; for man is a talking animal, and never more so than when he is trying to prove that silence is best. Frost has expressed the virtue of silence in hundreds of poems, each one of them more ingenious than the last in the way it takes of suggesting that it should not have been written at all. The greatest people keep still.

There may be little or much beyond the grave,
But the strong are saying nothing until they see.

Joking aside, Frost is a generous giver. He is not, thank heaven, one of those exiguous modern poets — Joseph Wood Krutch has called them costive — who hope to be loved because they have delivered so little: the fewer the poems, the better the poet. The fact is that the greatest poets have been, among other things, prolific: they have had much to say, and nothing has prevented them from keeping at it till they died.

Contrary to a certain legend, good poets get better with age, as Thomas Hardy for another instance did. The *Collected Poems* of Hardy are a universe through which the reader may travel forever, entertained as he goes by the same paradox as that which appears in the *Complete Poems* of Frost: the universe in question is presented as a grim, bleak place, but the longer one stares at it the warmer it seems, and the more capable of justifying itself beneath the stars. By an almost illicit process it manages in the end to sing sweetly of itself — not sentimentally, or as if it leaned upon illusion, but with a deep sweetness that truth cannot disturb. For truth is in the sweetness: a bitter-sweetness, shall we say, but all the better preserved for being so.

And this is the case, whether with Hardy or with Frost, because the poet has never grown tired of his function; has always known more, and known it better, as time passed; and has found it the most natural thing in the world to say so in new terms.

My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation.

The poet in Frost has never been different from the man, or the man from the poet; he has lived in his poetry at the same time that he has lived outside of it, and neither life has interfered with the other. Indeed it has helped; which is why we know that his poems mean exactly what he means, and might say in some other language if he chose. But he has chosen this language as the most personal he could find, toward the end that what it conveys should be personal for us too. We need not agree with everything he says in order to think him wise. It is rather that he sounds and feels wise, because he is sure of what he knows. And the extent of what he knows would never be guessed by one who met him only in anthologies. He is powerful there, but in the *Complete Poems* we find a universe of many recesses, and few readers have found

their way into all of these. Some of them are very narrow, it would seem, and out of the ordinary way; in the language of criticism they might even be dismissed as little "conceits"; but the narrowest of them is likely to lead further in than we suspected, toward the central room where Frost's understanding is at home.

The sign that he is at home is that his language is plain; it is the human vernacular, as simple on the surface as monosyllables can make it. Strangely enough, this is what makes some readers say he is hard — he is always referring to things he does not name, at any rate in the long words they suppose proper. He seems to be saying less than he does; it is only when we read close and listen well, and think between the sentences, that we become aware of what his poems are about. What they are about is the important thing — more important, we are tempted to think, than the words themselves, though it was the words that brought the subject on. The subject is the world: a huge and ruthless place which men will never quite understand, any more than they will understand themselves; and yet it is the same old place that men have always been trying to understand, and to this extent it is as familiar as an old boot or an old back door, lovable for what it is in spite of the fact that it does not speak up and identify itself in the idiom of abstraction. Frost is a philosopher, but his ideas are behind his poems, not in them — buried well, for us to guess at if we please.

2

WE CAN guess that his own philosopher is Heraclitus, who said: "If you do not expect it, you will not find out the unexpected. . . . Let us not make random guesses about the greatest things. . . . The attunement of the world is of opposite tensions, as is that of the harp or bow. . . . What agrees disagrees. . . . Strife is justice. . . . The road up and the road down is one and the same. . . . The beginning and the end are common. . . . A dry soul is wisest and best. . . . For men to get all they wish is not the better thing. . . . It is the concern of all men to know themselves and to be sober-minded. . . . A fool is wont to be in a flutter at every word." Yet the guess could be wrong, for Frost does not say these things, however strongly his poems suggest them. The suggestion may be nothing but a coincidence: the two men see the same world, and its end is like its beginning; down is up and up is down, the new is old and the old is new, and strife is justice.

At least we know nothing of justice if we know nothing of strife. It is tension that maintains our equilibrium; if opposites could not feel each other in the dark there would be no possibility of light. Good fences make good neighbors — each knows where he is and what confines him. Without a wall

between them, each would confuse himself with the other and cease to exist; or if there were fighting, it would be too close — a mere scramble, in which neither party could be made out. Distance is a good thing, and so is admitted difference, even when it sounds like hostility. For there can be a harmony of separate sounds that seem to be at war with another, but one sound is like no sound at all, or else it is like death. Let each thing know its limits even as it strains to pass them. No limit will ever be passed, since indeed it is a limit. Which does not mean that we shall never stare across the void between ourselves and others. People, for instance, who look at the sea —

They cannot look out far,
They cannot look in deep.
But when was that ever a bar
To any watch they keep?

It is human to want to know more than we can. But it is most human to know what "cannot" means.

Frost never says these things either; his poems only suggest them, and suggest further things that contradict them. His muse, like the truth, is cantankerous; it keeps on turning up fresh evidence against itself. And yet we cannot miss the always electric presence of opposition — two things or persons staring at each other across some kind of wall. Frost has no interest in doors that do not lock, in friends who do not know they are enemies too, or in enemies who do not know how to pretend they are friends, and even believe it as far as things can go. His drumlin woodchuck sits forth from his habitation like one who invites the world to come and visit him; but he never forgets the two-door burrow at his back. So Frost himself can reflect upon the triple bronze that guards him from infinity: his skin, his house, and his country. If he is greatly interested in the stars, and no poet is more so, the reason is that they are another world which he can see from this one, and accept or challenge as the mood of the moment dictates. They burn in their places as he burns in his, and it is just as well that neither fire can consume the other; yet each of them is a fire, and secretly longs to mingle with its far neighbor.

The great thing about man for Frost is that he has the power of standing still where he is. He is on the earth, and it is only one of many places, and perhaps every other place is better. But this is his place, where in spite of his longing to leave it he can stay till his time comes. Like any other distinguished person, Frost lives in two worlds at once: this one, and another one which only makes it more attractive. The superiority of the other one is what proves the goodness of the one we have, which doggedly we keep on loving, as doggedly it tolerates and educates us if we let it do so. Wisdom is enduring it exactly as it is; courage is being fa-

miliar with it and afraid of it in the right proportions; temperance is the skill to let it be; and justice is the knowledge that between it and you there will always be a lover's quarrel, never to die into cold silence and never to be made up. The main thing is the mutual respect.

Not that Frost wants us to think he knows everything.

If, as they say, some dust thrown in my eyes
Will keep my talk from getting overwise,
I'm not the one for putting off the proof.
Let it be overwhelming, off a roof
And round a corner, blizzard snow for dust,
And blind me to a standstill if it must.

His vision is the comic vision that doubts even itself. But it remembers all it can of what it always knew, and rests, in so far as the mind can ever rest, on the sum of its memories. The comic genius ignores nothing that seems true, however inconvenient it may be for something else that seems as true.

The groundwork of all faith is human woe. . . .
There's nothing but injustice to be had,
No choice is left a poet, you might add,
But how to take the curse, tragic or comic.

The choice of Frost is clear. His humor, an indispensable thing in any great poet, is in his case the sign that he has decided to see everything that he can see. No man of course sees all the world, but the poorest man is the one who blinds himself. The man with his eyes open has the best chance to understand things, including those things his ancestors have said. The minister says of the old lady who used to live in *The Black Cottage*: —

One wasn't long in learning that she thought
Whatever else the Civil War was for,
It wasn't just to keep the States together,
Nor just to free the slaves, though it did both.
She wouldn't have believed those ends enough
To have given outright for them all she gave.
Her giving somehow touched the principle
That all men are created free and equal.
And to hear her quaint phrases — so removed
From the world's view today of all those things.
That's a hard mystery of Jefferson's.
What did he mean? Of course the easy way
Is to decide it simply isn't true.
It may not be. I heard a fellow say so.
But never mind, the Welshman got it planted
Where it will trouble us a thousand years.
Each age will have to reconsider it. . . .
For, dear me, why abandon a belief
Merely because it ceases to be true.
Cling to it long enough, and not a doubt
It will turn true again, for so it goes.
Most of the change we think we see in life
Is due to truths being in and out of favor.

There it is. One couldn't say half so much if one were tragic.



An Atlantic Story



WALTER MACKEN and his blonde young wife live their country life on the west coast of Ireland, and when in Dublin are to be found in the neighborhood of the Abbey Theatre, where he is one of the leading dramatists and actors. He is the author of two plays and three novels — the third, *Rain on the Wind* (Macmillan), being the May selection of the Literary Guild. Mr. Macken writes with a native exuberance; and despite the pressure of Eire's censorship, he feels that Irish writers will find their best themes and do their best work if their roots are in home soil. Sean O'Faolain and Mary Lavin are two other Atlantic contributors who are with him in this.

THE KING

by WALTER MACKEN

I SAW the King three times in all. The first time we were endeavoring to rob him. It was our custom during the proper season to adjourn to the small market place where the country people came on a Saturday to sell their eggs and fowl and turf and odds and ends. Always great color there and confusion. Big women in shawls and red petticoats and heavy boots, and their men in bainin coats and ceanneasna trousers and the boots known as farmer's friends. The smell of porter and horses and asses and potatoes fresh from pits and eggs hot from hens and the yellow pats of butter wrapped in cabbage leaves. Loud talk and braying and waving of ashplants in brown hands and an optimistic street musician playing country songs that brought tears to leathery cheeks and hands to worn purses. The Small Crane they called it and we loved it.

Daneen and Jojo and myself were in it this day. We were sadly in need of equipment to make bows and arrows. In such case all you had to do was to go to this place and when an ass cart swung out of the small square, with the bundles of sally rods tied together and dangling behind, you crept up and pulled at the ends and drew them forth before the owner was aware of his loss. They were grand and long. The thick end made the bow and the top end, pointed and sharpened, was excellent for hitting and exploding the bulbs in the electric light standards.

So we dodged and laughed and jeered behind their backs at the Irish-speaking countrygoms.

We were very swift at this time because it was summer and we wore just torn shirts and trousers and our bare feet. We patted the noses of the hay-eating horses and pulled the tail of an ass to see could we tell what the weather would do, Daneen having one in his house, a small yoke of a toy ass with a string tail that could tell what the weather was going to do from the feel of it. The real ass didn't. Jojo spotted the cart leaving the place.

"Hi, they's one now, fellas," Jojo roared pointing at the ass cart with the tips of the bundled sally rods waving behind.

"Get after 'm, in the name a God," said Daneen spitting on his palms and rubbing them together as was his custom before action.

We jinked our way after the ass cart. Many people turned and cursed at us, mainly in Irish, which we didn't understand at this time, so that we weren't in the least offended. Under horses' bellies we went too, so that they reared up after we had passed and the owners' faces got red as they tried to quieten them, and we came up on the back of the home-going cart like panthers, bending down and our thin hands reaching up. Daneen, who was great at things like this, got the first one. It was a dandy. One great bow and two arrows at least. It would cause great destruction. Jojo pulled next and got one too. It was passable. Then I pulled and of course something went wrong and I nearly pulled the cart off the ass's back, so that the owner, who was sitting in front, turned and saw us and reached back with the whip

and aimed a blow at me. He was successful. I felt the sting of it and it made me mad.

"You bloody oul bogman!" I shouted at him, rubbing my cheek, furious that I had failed.

He said a lot of things then. In Irish. They must have been bad because they twisted his face. He was a strong-looking man with great muscles in his bare neck. I can always remember his face this time, and the other two times too for that matter. A strong face wanting a shave with bristles heavy on it and a mustache creeping down the sides of his mouth making him look like a picture of Genghis Khan in the history book, curse it, at school. His teeth were pointed and very white and he had thick eyebrows that jutted out over his eyes. They were very blue and not stern-looking, mind you. Even while he was cursing me I liked the look of him. He could be someone that you'd say would be great gas.

"Countrygawk, countrygawk, countrygawk!" I blatted at him like a music machine.

He alighted from the cart then and came back waving the whips. We backed away. I backed away first. Then I heard Daneen.

"Jay!" Daneen was ejaculating with awe. "It's the Potheen King, lads. It's the Potheen King."

That stopped us. For wasn't he a hero? There were more stories about him that could write two books and leave some over afterwards. We were all brought up on tales of him, of his utter cleverality in outwitting the hated policemen. I can't tell you all of them. Just about how he would get potheen past battalions of them. Even when they searched his cart and his ass and his wife and himself and his loads of turf. The potheen always arrived at its destination. Didn't he even arrange a great funeral one time and got enough through to drunken the whole of the County Galway? Oh, he was a hero. Even when the English police went and the Irish ones came, he made hares of them, and to us in those days anybody who could do that to the police was the knees of the bees. He was the ultimate. Anyhow, what I want to be understood is that he was a hero to us all. So what do we do?

I say: "I'm sorry, King," I say. "Honest to God I didn't know it was you."

"Here," says Daneen holding out the stolen sally rod. "Have it back, King."

"I'll give you mine too," says Jojo, a little reluctantly.

"Give's a sup a potheen," says Daneen, very forward.

He laughs then, the King does, holding the oul ass by the reins. "Off with ye, ye scoundrels," he says. "Away with ye, ye poor misshapen city garsuns. Keep the oul bits of sticks and bedammed to ye."

That's all he said to us. Just that and he jumped up on the cart and drove away and we stood there

looking after him admiringly. Once he turned and waved the whip at us, jollily, his white teeth shining.

"Jayney mac, isn't he great?" Daneen asked.

"That's really him?" I wanted to know.

"The very man," said Jojo.

We broke four electric light bulbs and my oul fella bet me.

2

THE second time was a bit different. We were much older. We wore long trousers with good creases in them and we had oil in our hair, different smells on each so that if you passed us by you would think you were meeting a flower garden. We were sitting on the worn stones of the big town bridge trying to click with a few girls that might be passing out to Salthill. There was little doing. Probably because even though we were highly decorated we didn't look very prosperous. One look the lassies would give us that said plainly, Hair Oil and Happence, and off they passed us by, looking for better game, so that we were forced to shout insults after them.

"To hell with this," says Daneen then. "We'll go down and see an American wake. I'm goin' to be a celebis anyhow. I hate girls. Yah, yah, yah, they'd talk the leg offa pot, so they would."

"And spend pounds on you as well," said Jojo, who never saw a raw pound in his life that wasn't broken down into coppers and bobs.

I agreed. I liked American wakes. The big ships came to our bay at this time and all the young country people were going to America on them and it would make a cat laugh to see and hear all the wailing and caterwauling that went on down there.

We had a little difficulty in getting onto the dock where the tender was. The gatekeeper was a crusty old bird with a beard and a sailor suit and he wouldn't let his own mother past the gate unless she was legitimate. We had to use a subterfuge. A simple one that had worked before. A woman going in with a big crowd and showing the passes, so Jojo catches her shawl and Daneen catches Jojo's coat and then holds me by the hand and we cover our eyes with our arms and start bawling crying as if our hearts were going to break. We nearly brought concrete tears to the hard oul eyes of the gateman as we passed through.

The tender was about to pull away. It was packed with the emigrants. All clustered up at the back. A forest of handkerchiefs waving and red eyes all over the place. The shawled women on the quayside with their arms stretched out and the shawls trailing from their shoulders and the real tears pouring down their faces. The bainin men with the ashplants too, rubbing their noses with their fingers, choking it all back. It was a

bit moving in a way if you let yourself become affected. So we didn't. We aped them a bit, and it would make you curl up to see Daneen with his arms held out and his face screwed up.

The tender hooted and spurted water and men threw off the ropes and she started to pull away from the quay.

It was then we saw the King.

He was standing with his arms spread out like Christ on the cross and he was crying. We hardly recognized him. He was old. His mustache was white even, and he had a red nose and he seemed to have withered a little. We weren't particularly keen on him now. Just a pleasant memory that we plucked up from the past.

"Why, that's the old King," said Daneen.

"As true as God it is," said Jojo.

We watched him.

He was a king in a way. He was kingly in that he saw his son going away on that tender and it was breaking his heart and he felt like crying aloud, so he cried and he didn't give a damn who saw him. He addressed his son too, in loving language. In Irish. We now knew some Irish. It had been forcibly impelled on us at school, the hard way. I knew what he was saying. He was saying: —

"My jewel of a son, do not leave me! Do not leave your poor old father. I have nobody in the world now but you and my breast will be aching when you are gone. I will be left like a wren in an empty nest. Come back to me, my little white son, come back to me, do not leave me alone. My live eyes will never see you again. Let you leap the distance now between the big ship and the earth and come again to the weary arms of your faithful father."

That's what he said. Between sobs and groans and the streaming tears. I saw his red-eyed son on the ship, looking so miserable with the cardboard suitcase at his feet. Big like his father had been. Out of place in his clothes and his shifting discomfort.

The boat pulled away and the son's hands tightened on the rail and from the ship and the quay there arose a crying like hundreds of curlews. We weren't jeering any longer somehow. We were quiet. You felt that there was a lot of real sorrow. The ship pulled away, the water churned into white porridge by the propellers, and when it was ten feet from the wall the King leaped after it with his hands outstretched.

He didn't reach it.

He fell into the white foam.

I saw the staring eyes of his son and I saw the life buoy thrown by one of the dockmen and I saw another man with his coat off, diving into the water. I saw the King coming to the surface, still wearing his cap with the peak down over his face. It was easy to see that he could not swim. He didn't care. He waved his hand at the departing

ship before he went down again. Then the swimming man reached him and threw the life buoy over him.

The others waited to see him taken out dripping. There was a lot of laughing, they tell me. It was great gas, they tell me. I didn't wait. I still remembered the King as he was, the fine strong man. I didn't want to hear them laughing.

The third time I saw him was the next afternoon. I was on the far side of the docks, watching the green water. The sea gulls were wheeling. The water of the docks was slicked with oil from the ships and the coal dust of the stilled carts. You could see orange peelings in the water and floating cigarette packets and an odd drowned dog. It wasn't very clean water. No dock water ever is. The thought of diving into it even on a hot day would repel you.

I saw the men in the rowing boat out in the middle of the docks pulling the grapple behind them. I saw it catch on something, strain, and I saw the men who were using the grappling hooks shout back over their shoulders. The oars were stilled and I saw the wet rope of the grapple come into the boat and then I saw the face of the King rising out of the water. For a moment he faced me, with his closed eyes. He had lost his cap and you could see his forehead was white where the sun never saw it for the cap. His hair was very gray and very scanty. I thought his face was very small, and high up on his white forehead there was a light blue mark.

The men rowed slowly towards the steps, the steps with the green slime on them. The grapple man held the coat of the King and hauled him after the boat. His head fell forward and it made a special wake of its own in the slimy water.

Someone had heard him splashing in. Late last night.

He must have come down to say a phantom farewell to a lost son. He must have. And he must have slipped and hit his head on the granite of the quay and he must have slipped in then. The quay was the last place that held the sight of his beloved son. So he had come again. He must have fallen in. He may have taken a few jars to dull the agony of his separation. He might have staggered. Anything like that might have happened. After all he was old, wasn't he? He wasn't the tall rangy man that had defied the police of two countries, for the love of it I would say. So he died like that. Pathetic you say.

I don't know.

Poetic I'd say, who had seen it all.

The King is dead, and there'll be no other. Not again. There could have been only one and he had no son to bear the crown.

I went home when they reached the steps and my head was down.



Composer, author, and teacher, NICOLAS NABOKOV has published recently under the Atlantic-Little, Brown imprint his first volume of musical reminiscences, *Old Friends and New Music*, and he is now in Europe gathering the source material for his next book. Born in St. Petersburg in 1903, Mr. Nabokov was educated in Russia and, after the Revolution, at the Berlin Conservatory and at the University of Paris. He wrote his first ballets in Paris for Diaghilev, including his now famous *Union Pacific*; and in the 1930s he came to the United States. An American citizen, he served as Cultural Adviser to Ambassador Murphy in Berlin; now he gives us an account of the resuscitation of German music which has taken place since the war.

MUSIC IN GERMANY

Berlin Revisited

by NICOLAS NABOKOV

1

FASTEN your safety belts, please," said the neutral voice in the loud-speaker. "Thank heavens, it's nearly over!" I thought as a last bump jolted me half out of the seat. I looked out of the window where the left wing dipped menacingly over the ground. Yes, there it was, so familiar, so unchanged — just as I had left it three years ago. The same pitiful squares of vegetable gardens planted between ruins and rubble; the same treeless parks; the same naked sadness, ruin, and desolation.

The plane skimmed the jagged ruins towards the gray semicircle of the Tempelhof Terminal. Inside, the terminal seemed equally unchanged. The worn-out sofas and club chairs stood in the same old places; the same sickening smell of doughnuts and coffee; the same row of bored, jaundiced porters in their black Luftwaffe overalls.

The customs ritual took five minutes. Then I climbed into a tiny "bug" — the Volkswagen-type taxi — and we began driving towards the center of West Berlin.

Suddenly all was different. From the low windows of the car, I could see rows of small stores, their show windows packed with goods, and one-story dwellings, newly built and freshly painted. True enough, between them were gaping cavities, blocks of ruins, heaps of rubble. But most of the cavities had been cleared of rubble and transformed into parking lots; the ruins had been tidied and surrounded by brick walls; the rubble had been piled in orderly heaps, encased in flower beds, or framed with borders of freshly mowed grass.

And the people had changed. No more the sallow elderly men, the gaunt women with their sickly chil-

dren, who dragged themselves along the streets of Berlin in 1945 and 1946, with sullen expressions. The people looked younger, fresher, fatter. They walked faster, and some had new clothes, new handbags, new shoes. Mothers pushed new perambulators. Boys and girls passed my "bug" on new bicycles. Even the Kaiseralle had changed. The mass of pinkish ruins had receded into the background and had acquired an ageless permanent visage. Some of it was already covered with moss, grass, and even ivy. It had become, like so much else in Berlin, part of a curious, neo-romantic bombscape.

We stopped at the Hotel am Zoo where the Herr Portier himself took me up in a silent and sedate lift to a large, impeccable room. It looked newly painted, waxed, dusted, brushed, polished, rubbed, and scrubbed. "Some change!" I said to the porter. "Na . . . dann!" he replied with a bitter grin. "Dann it was all a mess," he continued in English. "What could you do mit de French and English *Journalisten*? So disorderly, so disorderly . . ." he lamented. "All of dem coming and going . . . always in and out . . . three or four in a room . . . never sleep, always parties . . . and what goings on at those parties . . . what drinking . . . what ladies!!" And having thus completed his lament, he added sententiously, "It costed de manachment nearly a million marks to put de Hotel again into a ships-shape."

I asked for a telephone directory and inquired whether it contained Russian sector numbers. He looked at me in astonishment, visibly taken aback by my unexpected request.

"No, the Hotel does not have a Berlin-Ost telephone book and Russian numbers you can't get," he replied with a proud finality in his voice.

I picked up the telephone and called a friend, the composer Boris Blacher. "Oh! Hello," answered a cheerful voice at the phone. "Welcome back. We got your wire and we're expecting you. When are you going to come?" I suggested after dinner. "No, no. Why *after* dinner?" he replied. "Come *for* dinner." And he laughed in the phone. "You see, times have changed; now *we* can invite *you* for dinner. We'll ask the Rufers to join us and it will be like old times."

2

My good friend the eminent German composer Boris Blacher has had a complex and twisted career, an illustration of the hazards and vicissitudes to which a creative artist is subjected in our absurd and cruel century. By birth he belongs to a Russified Baltic family of German extraction which, after the outbreak of the Bolshevik terror, fled from Russia to Harbin in Manchuria. Thousands of Russian bourgeois and intellectuals flocked there escaping the charms of Lenin's regime and soon established Russian schools, political parties, Russian newspapers and libraries, Russian publishing houses and hospitals.

Blacher got his first education in music at the Russian conservatory of Harbin and only moved to Germany, I believe, in the middle twenties. Once in Germany he completed his studies and soon developed a great facility in composing combined with an equal versatility in the various techniques that govern the modern use of musical materials. Fortunately his versatility in adopting the devices discovered by his older contemporaries went well in hand with a natural lyrical gift and with an intuitive sense of clear-cut formal structure. He also developed a liking for a transparent sound texture, achieved by means of neat and well-mannered linear writing. Towards the end of the twenties and in the early thirties, compositions by Boris Blacher began to be performed, his first scores began to be printed, and the more alert music critics and young composers talked about him as a rising star.

Like many musicians all over the world, Boris Blacher has always been essentially apolitical. Although strongly opposed to the rising tide of Nazism in the early thirties, he did not bend to the other extreme, as did some of his colleagues, and he did not join or coöperate or even sympathize with the Communist Party in Germany. Yet despite his relative lack of musical status and nonpolitical record, as soon as the Nazis took power Blacher was forced to go into eclipse for the duration of the twelve-year Third Reich. This forced eclipse was caused by Blacher's partly Jewish ancestry, by the fact that his music fell into the category of the so-

called "degenerate art," and by his own reluctance to play any role under the Nazis. His music stopped being performed or printed in Germany, and Blacher's name henceforth was never mentioned in German newspapers or magazines.

I vaguely remember hearing about him during those years when he was more or less "in hiding" — that he was diligently composing; that he had a small job as an arranger and orchestrator at the Dresden radio station; and that occasionally some of his music did get performed in a semiclandestine way.

Towards the end of the war Blacher moved to Berlin and when the collapse came he suddenly found himself in an unexpectedly advantageous position. He had not collaborated with the Nazis; he had suffered from the obscurantist strictures of the Nazi regime; he spoke Russian fluently; and he was known as a serious, highly promising musician of the "pre-Nazi" era. Consequently, as soon as General Berzarin became Berlin's first Russian commandant, Blacher was assigned as the music "specialist" of the Russian-controlled radio station of Berlin. Here, by a curious irony, he assumed exactly the same duties he had performed during his long "exile" under the Nazis. He had to arrange, adapt, orchestrate, and write background music for radio.

He was compelled to continue at the Berlin radio for nearly two years. But his fame as a composer was rising fast in Central Europe, Switzerland, and England. He was asked by all sorts of radio stations, musical associations, and festival organizations to write operas, symphonic pieces, quartets, and piano music. He had in stock a sizable amount of music composed during the lean Nazi years. Besides, during his long "radio penance," he had developed a technique of composition surpassing in rapidity even such champions of compositional stenography as the Italian opera composers of the eighteenth century. Blacher's output for the years 1945 and 1946 was two and one-half operas, four symphonic pieces, one oratorio, several chamber music works, songs, piano music, and of course kilometers of radio music. All this phenomenal accomplishment was achieved in the wretched surroundings of post-war Berlin.

I met Blacher during the winter of 1945-46 and we soon became friends. I liked his imaginative, agile mind, his amusing wit, his crisp sarcasm about his own work, about Berlin, and about the state of music in devastated Germany. He seemed so different from other Germans, with their stodgy spirit and ways, their constant laments and protests of innocence, or their embittered sense of inferiority. On the heavy horizon of Berlin's civilian life, with its innumerable hardships, the Blachers, both husband and wife, seemed light, witty, and fresh. It was not that they were inordinately gay people, but Boris's eyes held an amused and friendly glint and he was optimistic and confident about the future.

They were among the very few Berliners I knew at that time who had not lost their sense of humor and had not developed what the late German poet Ringelnatz used to call "the ingrown toenail complex of the German race."

Blacher finally succeeded in disentangling himself from his radio obligations and began to make a living as a free-lance composer, occupying posts at the Berlin Conservatory, at the music summer schools of Bryanston in England and Salzburg in Austria. For, besides being an eminent composer, Blacher is also a teaching wizard. His analytical versatility enables him to explain or to "indoctrinate" young composers in the secrets and "devices" of all modern techniques. Among Blacher's students are some of the best young composers of Central Europe; such as the Austrian composer Gottfried von Einem, whose opera *Danton's Death* was produced with considerable success at the Salzburg Festival in 1948.

3

THE Blachers lived far out in the American sector and it took me three quarters of an hour to get there. Boris greeted me cheerfully on the steps. "Well," he said, offering me a chair, "sit down and tell us all about yourself. Where have you been, what have you done, and what is new in America?"

"How long are you staying in Berlin, or are you like most Americans, just here between two planes?" And he continued with a chuckle, "Isn't it true that Americans stay two or three days in Berlin, just enough time to collect material for several articles? Then they go back and write wonderful things about us Berliners — how courageous we are, what splendid morale we have, how well we resist hardships . . ." He spoke in an amused and slightly malicious way, yet there was no trace of scorn or sarcasm in his voice. I replied that I was going to say in Berlin for six days and that I was counting on him to guide me around and take me to hear all the new music.

"That's not difficult," said Blacher, and laughed. "You don't have to stay six days in Berlin to do that, you can do it in two."

Blacher's wife came in with a roast and placed it on the table. I couldn't help staring at the meat with astonishment. "Ah yes," said Mrs. Blacher as if reading my thought. "This is the first time we can invite you to a real dinner. In 1946 only black marketeers could afford butter, white bread, and roast beef. Now . . ."

"But you know," interrupted Blacher, "sometimes I regret the hunger of those years. Now that we have it all," and he nodded towards the plate his wife was passing to him, "I'm not so sure that those hunger years weren't in many ways better than . . . at least then we were full of hope . . . and now . . . what can get better now?"

"But let's talk about you and about America,"

he started anew. "What have you written? How is Virgil Thomson?" (He had met Thomson when the latter came to visit Berlin in the summer of 1946 and wrote a brilliant post-war report on music in Germany, naming Blacher as one of the top composers.) "Have you seen Stravinsky? How is his opera progressing? Have you heard any of it? What interesting new music is there in America? What is Menotti's *Consul* like?" He kept bombarding me with similar questions all through the meal. I told him all I knew and did my best to give him a complete picture of musical affairs in America.

The Rufers, father, mother, and daughter, arrived in time for dessert. The Rufers, although different in temperament and cultural background, had in other ways a kinship with the Blachers. Joseph Rufer, the eminent Viennese musicologist and a disciple and friend of Schoenberg, was the first to resume a music conservatory in the American sector of Berlin in 1946 and to publish a music magazine, *Stimmen*. He, his wife, and their daughter Iselin were, like the Blachers, friendly and "light" people, and like the Blachers had not lost their sense of humor, their natural gaiety.

I asked Blacher to show me some of his new music but he refused. "First of all," he said, "I haven't written anything for months; and secondly, why should I bore you with my music?" I pressed the point; I wanted to know why he had ceased writing.

"I don't know what to tell you," he said hesitantly. "I simply don't feel like it. Besides, I have written too much music in the past . . . and . . . why, may I ask, should I be expected to write music all the time and particularly now?" Rufer agreed with Blacher. "I don't see how composers in Berlin can be expected to compose music. Everybody's mind is elsewhere."

Blacher's wife nodded and said, "We can think only of one thing: When will it begin again?"

"No, I didn't mean exactly that," said Blacher, drawling out every word; "it's not the fear of a new war that made me stop composing. It's something different. You see," he said, "in the last four years I have explored in my music most of the techniques, styles, and forms which are current nowadays. I have tried to experiment and to understand most of the aesthetic problems raised by my contemporaries. Suddenly I feel tired of them all and realize that very little new has transpired in music in the last ten or twenty years. Of course a lot of music has been written and some of it is quite good, but the principles were established long ago — some thirty or more years ago. . . . Somehow I feel that we have come to an impasse and that all our efforts are quixotic; they only lead to a kind of repetition or continuation of the same old things. Besides, the public continues to prefer Brahms and Wagner to our music. Nobody really seems to need new music."

"In the early post-war years, all seemed hopeful," he continued. "Even though we had nothing to eat in Berlin everything was exciting. We had been cut off from the rest of the world and had lost contact with what all of you were doing abroad. I remember how interested I was when in 1945 you gave your lectures here on music in America. I heard the names of Copland, Thomson, Barber, and other American composers for the first time. Then, all news from abroad seemed fresh and stimulating; the world outside of Germany was a vast unexplored territory. Now, of course, I realize that it was largely an optical illusion.

"And even politically . . . then, at least, I was foolish enough to believe that somehow things would work out and we would all be able to work in relative peace and rebuild our broken culture . . . but now . . . now, just look around and see what goes on here in Berlin. We are living on the front line, in trenches, and the only incomprehensible thing is that, as yet, nobody is shooting. Of course that makes for constant anxiety and gradually paralyzes one's will. It makes one feel old and worn. Most of us have grown fatter in Berlin. So much so that sometimes I can barely recognize some of my colleagues in the conservatory. But in a true sense we are more tired than we were. I often think that you in America must feel the same anxiety, but probably your degree of awareness is less. Ours is perhaps more acute, more immediate. The reason is simple. Even a five-year-old child in Berlin understands it. The reason is *there*," and he pointed in the direction of the Soviet sector.

There was a silence. Everyone looked down and all smiles were gone. Then Blacher's voice, calmer, gayer, broke in. "Maybe if I were in America," he said, turning to me, "I would feel otherwise, I would write again — and teach. You know how much I like teaching." And he looked me straight in the eye and said emphatically, "I believe that today America is the only country where a composer can work fearlessly."

It was late when I left the Blachers but I didn't want to go to bed. I told the cab driver to take me to the center of Berlin, to the Potsdamer Platz where the British, American, and Russian sectors meet. We drove through well-lit streets. Strains of dance music were coming from cafés and night clubs, and caravans of huge trucks rattled along, exhaling clouds of black Diesel smoke. The driver stopped on the British corner of the Potsdamer Platz in front of a newly rebuilt department store. I got out and walked towards the Brandenburg Gate, past the former gardens of the Reich Chancellery and the Foreign Office.

At the Brandenburg Gate a file of cars waited to get into the Russian sector, and as I passed behind them I noticed a policeman in black, standing on the other side of the gate checking plates and papers. I stopped near the last arch of the gate

and peered through it. As I looked at the weird cavities of the Pariser Platz and, beyond it, at the dim, dead Unter den Linden, the sense of threat concealed in the night came over me. Just in front, beyond the column upon which I leaned, practically within arm's reach, lay the boundary. Suddenly I felt its sinister and almost palpable reality. There it lay, under the shadow of the war-scarred gate, the border line that divided this vast, helpless city into two parts and made all life seem an absurdity. And Blacher's words came back to my mind: "The only incomprehensible thing is that, as yet, nobody is shooting."

4

DESPITE Boris Blacher's gloomy outlook I soon discovered that, outwardly at least, there had been a change for the better in the musical life of Berlin. Everything had improved, including both the quality of and the quantity of the music-making. The standards were of course still far from those I had known in the days of the Weimar Republic, but on the whole the musical life was that of a capital and not of a battered and half-dazed ruin. The mainstays of musical life remained the same big music-making organizations; the Berlin Philharmonic, the Municipal Opera, and the State Opera. All of them had stayed in the same old places: the first two in the Western sectors, the last in the Russian. To these old organizations should be added a new one, the Symphony Orchestra of the radio station in the American sector, which began to function late in 1947 and which in the last two years has become a first-rate ensemble, thanks to its dynamic young Hungarian conductor, Ferenc Fricsay, and American dollar standard salaries. This orchestra is particularly important to young composers, for it is the main outlet for new German music and the only outlet for contemporary American music.

Like all Americans, I was warned by the American authorities in Berlin to forbear any visits to the Russian sector in view of possible arrest and complications, and although I did not entirely conform to this suggestion, I renounced a visit to the State Opera in the Soviet sector, chiefly because its program during the five days I was in Berlin did not seem interesting enough to warrant any kind of risky adventure. Yet I was able to find a few facts about some of the protagonists of the "democratic cultural front" of East Berlin which seem to be true. For example, it is an incontrovertible fact that the composer Hans Eisler had taken a position in regard to Western music unusual for Stalin's cultural minions. A year and a half ago in a public lecture at the Humboldt University of East Berlin he declared, to everybody's surprise, that it is "foolish to deny" the fact that Stravinsky and Schoenberg are "great craftsmen"

of musical composition, and in fact probably "the greatest living masters of modern music"; but that in their music they "reflect only the world of decaying, capitalistic society" and thus their art is totally "incomprehensible, uncongenial, and unnecessary" to the masses of the world proletariat which has now built and is extending a new socialist society all over the world. Therefore, he called upon the composers of "democratic" Germany to "accept wholeheartedly the principles of the Prague declaration to abandon useless experimentation and formalistic tendencies" and to concentrate on writing "songs and music for the working classes."

In so far as Eisler himself is concerned, this was not difficult. Except for the period from 1939 to 1945 during his "Hollywood idyl," where he wrote interesting but utterly "decadent-corrupt-bourgeois-passportless-cosmopolitan" music, according to the standards of Stalinist aesthetic catechism, Eisler has always written so-called *Gebrauchsmusik* ("music for use") for the masses. Hence it was easy for him, upon his return from America, to resume the writing of songs and choruses whose characteristic qualities are banality, tunefulness, and march-time rhythms—exhibiting that particular brand of official "optimism" so well reflected in most of the odes to Stalin or songs of the German and French Red Pioneers. In these one can find all the harmonic banalities of the so-called "class-conscious" songs of the late 1890s, the worst aspects of Kurt-Weillism of the 1920s, and, at times, a sprinkling of Hindemithical or Bach-like counterpoint. The astonishing thing about the whole affair was of course the fact that Hans Eisler termed such "vile lackeys of capitalism" as Stravinsky and Schoenberg "master craftsmen," but the phrase may have been necessary in the complex environment of not entirely "assimilated" Germany.

During my visit in Berlin the Municipal Opera House in the British sector had only one novelty on its program: a full evening ballet, *Abraxas*, by the European composer Werner Egk. The rest was staple repertory: *Tristan* and *Fidelio*. Of the two staples I chose the latter and was very agreeably surprised to hear one of the best *Fidelios* of my life. The young Hungarian conductor Fricsay produced an ensemble of singing and playing that was so homogeneous, so precise, and at the same time so profoundly lyrical that all the moving, humane parts of Beethoven's music stood out as they rarely do in the average performance. None of the singers was permitted to be an individual star; all of them were stylistically perfect. The staging was impressive, particularly in the prison scene, where the able director Heinz Titjen suggested the atmosphere of a concentration camp rather than of a prison and thus gave the whole scene an additional gruesome poignancy.

The ballet *Abraxas*, on the contrary, disappointed me. Its title is derived from medieval cabalistic legends but its action reflects a number of incidents of Goethe's *Faust*. Unfortunately, the high aim of the composer and of his collaborator, the young French choreographer and ballerina Janine Charrat, in dealing with such a famous subject in a new way and by means of ballet, does not quite come off. *Abraxas*, to me, seemed dull, repetitious, provincial, and terribly Central European. It began with a bearded gentleman (Faust) who appeared on a dark stage, followed by a white spotlight. He made all sorts of angular gestures with his arms, hands, feet, hips, and head, which I presume suggested a cabalistic ritual invoking the powers of nature (or Hell). After a while a greenish creature in tights crept up to the bearded gentleman and started to wind herself, eel-like, around his feet and legs. Suddenly the spotlights faded, and when they went on again the beard had disappeared and the gentleman was dressed in the pretty clothes of a medieval rogue, surrounded by equally prettily garbed ladies. From then on he began making violent love to a succession of ballet ladies, including a Margaret, a Helena, and Miss Janine Charrat herself, under the guise of the greenish, tight-clad devil. His love-making was supported by a large imitative cast. It was intense, obnoxious, and lecherous. The dancers rolled on the floor in realistic poses. At a certain moment a devil whipped everyone into a trancelike, orgiastic dance, and at other times Faust appeared entwined with one of his paramours in frozen promiscuity. The whole affair ended with the safe return of the beard to its former owner and with a rowdy mass lynching of the innocent Margaret. Egk's music with its square rhythms, its obvious repetitive thematic material, and its somewhat obtuse stressing of tonality unmitigated by fresh modulatory inventiveness formed a curiously anemic background to this orgy.

As we were leaving, my companion, a young American girl, considerably shocked by what she had seen, remarked, "Look at them," and she pointed at the crowd of rosy-cheeked German couples around us, still applauding enthusiastically. "They all look as if they were licking their chops after a good dinner."

5

THE evening after this libidinous fare I was invited by the Rufer family to go with them to a concert of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by the ever-present Fricsay. It was summer and most German conductors were on various music festival junkets. Hence Fricsay combined the normal work of three men, conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra, the Municipal Opera, and the American radio orchestra. I was very eager to hear

the orchestra. I had admired it in the twenties, and during the hard winter of 1945-46 I had a great deal to do with the resumption of its artistic activities. The orchestra was unrecognizable. The various defects in its sections, so hard hit by the war and the post-war period (loss of instrumentalists and instruments, denazification, and malnutrition), had been corrected and the Berlin Philharmonic was once again one of the finest symphonic ensembles on the European continent. Its playing was again stylistically and technically irreproachable, its discipline superior to that of most European orchestras, and its sense of communal effort combined with a specifically German earnestness in the performance of duty was again of the highest order.

What struck me particularly was the solid power and richness of its brasses, a specialty of good German orchestras — a fact which I had forgotten after having been accustomed to the more suave and technically more accomplished brasses of American and French orchestras. I marveled also at the disciplined precision of the bowing technique of the strings (chiefly the first violins). The balance of the four sections and the individual qualities of the soloists were perhaps not as polished as those of some American orchestras, but its general sense of tradition, particularly in phrasing (chiefly in the German classics: Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schubert) and its wholehearted obedience to the music's dynamic and structural needs, is, I believe, superior.

After the concert we drove out to Ferenc Fricsay's house for a quiet and pleasant supper. The amiable young conductor and his lovely Viennese wife showed me the warmest and most kindly hospitality. I complimented Fricsay on his *Fidelio* performance and on his handling of the Philharmonic concert during the same week. "That's nothing," he said smilingly; "there is something else that I did earlier in the week," and he pointed at several rolls of tape lying near a recording machine. "I've recorded two complete programs of modern German music which the station is beaming to America in exchange for modern American music." I wanted to hear the pieces he had recorded and as soon as we left the table he played the recordings.

The most remarkable piece was a symphony for strings by the Munich composer Carl Amadeus Hartman. Here is a work of real imagination, where the string ensemble is used as ably as in Bartók's concerto for strings and percussion and in the six quartets. The polyphony is transparent and solidly built. The harmonies are logical and fresh; the formal structure is laconic, intelligent,

and well-proportioned. Best of all, it has none of that pernicious avitaminosis which is so frequent now in Western European music. It is a vivid, dynamic piece written in personal and convincing language.

Every time Fricsay would put on a new roll of tape I would express my admiration for his superb performance. He would smile and say, "Well, that's the advantage of working with the American radio. I can have as many rehearsals as I need, and I believe modern music needs much more rehearsal time than old music. It has to be performed in detailed perfection in order to make sense." After the last roll had been played he said, "Of course I have exceptionally good musicians in the radio orchestra. I was able to wean them away from all over Germany, and chiefly from the Eastern zone, because we pay dollar standard salaries, higher than most orchestras in Western Germany and much higher than those in Eastern Germany, which, besides, are paid in rather 'unpopular' East marks. What can a musician get for his East marks in Berlin? Nothing! They still live on ration coupons, you know, down there . . ." And like Blacher he pointed in the direction of the Soviet zone.

In order to form a clearer picture of creative musical developments in Germany, I asked both Fricsay and Rufer a few essential questions. Their answers can be resumed thus: the leading composers in Western Germany at the present time are the following five — Werner Egk (at this moment perhaps the most successful), Carl Orff, Wolfgang Fortner, Johann Wolfgang Hartman, and of course Boris Blacher.

The tendencies of these five composers vary from primitivistic medieval revivalism and comfortable neo-classicism to a more complex expressionism in the Bartók vein and to a shy and somewhat awkward experimentation with atonality and twelve-tone technique. The latter tendency is gaining ground among the younger composers, chiefly those who are in contact with French developments in that direction. The main influence in the last five years, however, has unquestionably been that of Boris Blacher. His pedagogical ability, his prolificness, and his versatility have combined to make him the most influential person in Central European music. "If only you could help him to go to America," said Rufer. "He is so disgusted here with all this political mess and the ever-present Comrades in the East that he can't work." "Yes, like most of us younger musicians here in Berlin," echoed Fricsay, completing Rufer's thought, "he dreams of going to America, where one can still work and teach in peace."



STEVE HALL was an American boy with a restless urge to see the world. After graduating from Phillips Andover in 1934, he entered Yale, but the routine of college life he found monotonous and he signed up as a seaman on coastwise vessels. In the autumn of 1936 he tried to get his bearings at Harvard, but again his studies palled and during his second year at Harvard he left on a long skiing trip in the Dolomites of North Italy, an expedition which was to determine his future. He returned to this country an expert mountaineer, rock climber, and skier; for a time he worked in an insurance office in Boston; then he was drawn West to the oil fields, and drilled for oil in Oklahoma before he entered the Army in 1941.

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

The Letters of CAPTAIN R. S. G. HALL

STEVE was twenty-six when he entered the Army in 1941; tall, husky, and full of initiative. He was commissioned in the Combat Engineers, but his knowledge of Italian and French and his familiarity with the mountain country close to the Brenner Pass made him ideally suited for the OSS, once our campaign in Italy was under way. In his application, Steve proposed the plan: "Drop a man by parachute in the open country between Pacal and the Falzarego Pass, and drop enough personal equipment to sustain him indefinitely in the peaks. Drop TNT and a tool kit. . . ." He had been trained as a paratrooper, and he spent months preparing for the mission. At midnight of August 2, 1944, he was dropped with four other men behind the German lines. His letters to his family tell what happened.

October 31, 1944, ANDRICH, CADORE, ITALY

Your last letters, all written in July and August, arrived in a bunch — by parachute! The heavy cases of arms and explosives and supplies came floating down silently through the night; and among them was a package (with its own chute) which carried all the news from home.

I was the only one of our team who got mail, so I read some of the paragraphs to the others to give them a little taste of home — all about Father's big tomato in the garden, and the water shortage this summer, and the busted outboard of Bruce's. We all got a big laugh out of the clipping which showed the chart on the wall, "My Draft Status," and had the caption, "They were certainly breathing down my neck there for a while!" We were definitely in a situation where "they were breathing down our necks," and could enjoy that one heart-

ily. However, for security reasons, I had to burn all the mail, much as I hated to, keeping only the birthday cards, which I have carried with me ever since.

You see, we were some 250 miles behind the front in Italy and actually right up against the border of Germany itself — in the Italian Alps where, as you know, I'd always wanted to fight my tiny part of this war, anyway. The letters appeared out of the dark over a wide place in the bed of the Tagliamento River near a village called "Enemonzo," about 10 miles east of Ampezzo and the same distance west of Tolmezzo. At Tolmezzo there were 11,000 Nazi troops and Mongoloids from Turkestan, picked up in the German retreat from the Caspian and now serving as mercenaries.

We used the river flats for over twelve "supply drops," although our flaming signal fires were in full sight of Tolmezzo, on the nights when we got the signal over the regular commercial program from London to expect a planeload. To get to the dropping zone we rode in a huge truck (captured from the Nazis) which roared down through the winding gorges of the Tagliamento at terrific speed from Ovasta. We went so fast because it was a race to a certain road fork. We had to make it before the Germans did, if they should ever get it into their thick skulls to investigate what was going on. I believe they knew; but psychology was on our side: they imagined our partisan bands of Italian patriots so strong that any attack by them would be suicidal. Actually we had less than 1000 men in our command.

At Ovasta, a medieval hamlet lodged on a shelf overlooking the river and ringed round by the gigantic spears and flakes of the Carnic Alps, we had

our "Base" Headquarters. We had a powerful short-wave set with which to communicate with Army HQ 'way to the south; and a room or two; and a tobacco supply composed of old "butts" and corn silk.

I was at "Base" very little, spending my time in long swings — by trail, or motorcycle, or bicycle, or climbing rope — deep into zones crawling with Germans but where unarmed groups of patriots waited for help. So my returns to "Base" were always occasions for mutual celebration; it was good to get back to a bed and hot food after sleeping in hay barns or caves and eating mushrooms and cold corn meal, with an occasional squirrel thrown in. The days went very fast then. At "Base" there were corn on the cob and American radio programs; and Smitty (Maj. Lloyd C. Smith, State College, Pa.) had arranged a deal with a pre-war ice cream freezer so that we had ice cream now and then — all we had to do was climb down 1500 feet to the valley floor and then climb up again.

But I'm getting 'way ahead of things. The peaks are plated with ice now; there are drifts in the passes and snow powderings in the valleys. During August, everything was green and warm — we took our showers in waterfalls, went roaring up and down the village streets singing Yankee songs to the delighted grins of the war-weary people who were fed to the ears with the grim and cruel Nazi soldiers.

You know how long I'd worked on this Alps thing — well, I finally sold it to GHQ. We put together a team of five: Major Smith, who'd won the DSC getting thirteen stranded nurses out of Nazi hands in Albania; 1st Lt. Joe Lukitsch of Cleveland, a paratrooper who came over on the boat with me; Sgt. Victor Malaspino from New Jersey, interpreter, who worked for me when I was chief instructor in the Spy School in the mountains outside Algiers; 1st Class Seaman Stan Sbeig from Bridgeport, radioman.

Smitty was to organize and direct partisans in Carnia, and I was to do the same in Cadore, having also the mission of closing the Cortina road. Once inside German-occupied territory, we were entirely on our own, as autonomous as soldiers of fortune in a Chinese war or banana republic revolution. But I guess General Devers and General Alexander had faith in us because they okayed the deal.

Of course it wasn't as easy as that; the project had to be drafted as carefully as a case before the Supreme Court; and the preparations were as detailed as an expedition to Everest: maps, sleeping bags, foreign money, climbing gear, radio ciphers, medicine, and just about a thousand damn things — all weighed and triple-checked.

Finally, the night of August 1, we gathered under the wing of a big four-motored Lancaster at Brindisi airport. We had on "strip-tease" suits, against the cold at 10,000 feet, and looked like Eskimos. We sweated rivers — and froze later over Udine.

The ride was painful, for we were cramped in among the containers of our supplies, and the roar of the engines was overwhelming — also, naturally, the prospect of a parachute jump into enemy territory at night, or any other time, is none too comforting.

At Brindisi we did not know just where we'd drop. A couple of places I'd been counting on were ruled out in the last two days because of Nazi troop movements. We climbed up through the small hole in the bottom of the plane and found we were bound for Mount Pala in the foothills of the Alps of Carnia, bad news for me, as it was some 85 miles from the Cortina area. Smitty and I squabbled for the privilege of being "first out" in the jump, but he outranked me.

We nearly did not make it, as the pilot could not find the right pattern of ground fires in the right place. Jerry was, aside from shooting at us with flak, apparently lighting a few signals to decoy us. Finally the word came back over the intercom that the right fires had been spotted, but in the wrong place. One of the crew opened the hatch, and after a dying run by the plane, Smitty, Vic, and Stan disappeared through the hole — just like that. Joe Lukitsch and I swung our legs into the hole and looked down. With a full moon the tumbled hills far below looked eerie; the fires looked small and distant — they were, about 2500 feet. Suddenly the green light blazed and the bell rang on the wall of the ship, and I dropped through, Joe right after me. The chute opened with a crack, but I had a bad spin and the shroud lines were twisting rapidly — if they twist enough, the chute collapses. I fought for about 1000 feet before the twists came out.

Then I looked around. With the night breezes Joe sailed past like a shot out of a cannon. Below, there was nothing but hill, woods, and rocks. It looked like a trap. I was sure it was when I landed — between two wicked spikes of limestone, doing a couple of back somersaults down a gully into some saplings. There wasn't a person around, just complete silence. I cut my way out of the chute and got out my automatic. For twenty minutes there wasn't a sound. Then I made for a low, bare hillock near by, and in a little while the others came up. It was 2 A.M. The fires were phony all right. Smitty had landed near them and had seen a man running away.

About 700 yards away a fire shone on the side of Mount Pala, but we couldn't find the path; which was lucky as the fire came from a house the Germans were burning, we found out later. They were too drunk to pay any attention to the drop.

We hid in a deep swale until dawn, and then I went to a farmhouse to ask questions. By noon we had made contact with some local partisans and later were on our way back into the mountains. We felt that we had been granted a miracle. The whole operation was in full sight of Nazi observation towers in the plain below, and the lack of reception and

the hideous rock pile we landed on should have made us all casualties and easy prisoners. Aside from cuts and bruises we were okay. It took the Nazis a week to start chasing us.

On August 12 I started out alone for the Cadore, about 30 miles from Ovasta, crossing Lavardet Pass; made contact with the partisans around San Stefano, and started work. The Cadore was tough, because there were Nazi garrisons in all the towns, and the area was much more populated and desirable to Jerry than desolate Carnia. Cortina alone had 1000 picked troops to guard the 5000 wounded Nazis in the hotels and hospitals there.

The Air Corps would not drop to me in Cadore — mountains too high; although I spent eighteen days at a dropping zone on the Austrian border (the Val Visdende) — watching the Army build its “Alpine Line.” Whatever you’ve heard about that in the papers is direct intelligence I gathered. Finally we rigged a system for back-packing arms and explosives across the ranges from Carnia. I traveled back and forth and round about all over the area, always in uniform, often 500 yards from Nazi garrisons, or walking past their front doors at night, and earned a pair of legs like cast iron.

So, by the end of September, I had been able to get an organization of 500 men on its feet, dispatch reams of important intelligence to GHQ, blow out the standard gauge R.R. from Venice and the electric R.R. through Cortina to Austria, and eleven highway bridges, effectively blocking all routes through the Alps north of Venice. Mr. Nazi was proportionately furious, the more so when we attacked three garrisons, taking around 187 prisoners.

But by the end of September there was snow on the highest peaks, and the campaign in Italy had changed to a holding action, designed to keep as many Nazi troops there as possible, so they wouldn’t reinforce the other fronts. Our time schedule was badly upset. We got the terrific news, too, that Jerry planned to turn over Carnia to the savages from Turkestan, who would massacre all the Italians and take the farms for themselves — thus giving future Germany an area deep into Italy populated by a solid block of pro-Nazi Mongols.

Smitty worked himself green, getting in arms for the poor Italians and begging to have Tolmezzo bombed — but GHQ wouldn’t bomb, for some unknown reason. All things taken together, we felt we had to stay until the front had advanced considerably, so as to help the Army as much as possible in cutting the supply lines.

In spite of the shadow that hung over Carnia, everything was going very well in the upper Piave River valley in Cadore. At the end of September I heard about a large group of Italian patriots — all ex-Alpini soldiers — on the *other* side of Cortina, over near Selva-di-Cadore. They needed help. So I made up my pack and started out, contouring the

peaks just at the line where the bare rock jumps from the steep scrub slopes. It took three days to make the 55 miles and involved 32,000 feet of climbing. But from August 12 till now (three months, or a little less) I’d been living and working at 7000 feet and often going to 9000 feet on reconnaissance, so it wasn’t too tough. I lost some time skirting the Marmarole range and Mount Antelao, as I had to slip through patrols of 500 Nazi Alpenjaeger who were out hunting partisans, and the last day was in a snowstorm and a foot of new snow over the flank of Mount Pelmo.

This group was all I’d heard, being all ex-officers and noncoms of the Alpini troops who knew every trail and crag of all the Dolomites. Their HQ was only four hours by foot from Cortina, just over the range I had skied in 1937–38. I got a message back to “Base” requesting a drop. The plane came, two weeks later, in the middle of a Nazi drive on partisans around Cortina, so we did not get the drop, being unable to light signal fires. We climbed up in the rock of the precipices for five straight days and watched the Nazis hunting for us in the forests below. Each evening they fired cannon and machine guns up into the rock gullies — just in case; and we watched the tracers smack on the rock all around us. We couldn’t do anything, having no guns. But they never really saw us, and finally went away.

Then I got crushing news: the 14,000 troops at Tolmezzo had overrun Carnia from the south, while 3000 Nazis, brought in from Austria, attacked from the north. Smitty and the rest were caught between the two forces, and I haven’t heard a whisper about them since — over three weeks. I feel sure he must have got through and escaped toward Yugoslavia, that being one of our exit plans before we started.

But for three weeks now I’ve been the only Allied officer in the whole Alps — and without a radio. Just waiting for some break and trying to keep up the partisans’ courage. Not that the time has been wasted. I managed to get contact with certain people in Bolzano and perfected a plan for blowing out one of the tunnels on the R.R. through the Brenner; sent the explosive off to them disguised as crates of *jam* last week!

Then, too, I managed to sign up a couple of electrical engineers and we worked out a scheme for crippling the entire telephone and telegraph net in the Alps here — important, because of the Alpine Line fortifications Jerry is working on so feverishly. And of course there’s been a wad of intelligence coming in: for example, by a stroke of pure luck, I got the map of the Nazi troop dispositions as planned for the defense of the Brenner — stuff like that; another case, the HQ of the Japanese secret service (Hotel Corona, Cortina).

It has snowed every day for three weeks, and is still at it, so movement is out of the question, as Jerry can track you too easily in the snow. How-

ever, recently I made contact with an officer (Capt. Joe Benucci) down in the Venetian plain below Belluno; so things are looking up. He has a radio.

At present I'm in the tiny hamlet of Andrich, part of the community of Vallada, 3 miles west of Cencenighe; whiling away the hours reading *Ivanhoe* and some 1939 copies of *Collier's* someone dug up!

The position is really good, as it's plunk in the middle of the Alpine Line the Nazis are building. They're laboring over some beautiful targets for us to blow up when and if we get a drop. But you don't need to worry: we're getting to be old hands at the art of running in under the Nazi's nose and blowing the shoestrings out of his boots before he knows what's happened. If he ever catches up with me, all he'll find is another Yank who parachuted from a crashing plane and who is waiting for the end of the war.

How I'll get out, I don't know, although I wish I could give you some assurance. The possibility of crossing the Swiss frontier is out of the question now because of the snow (it came a whole month early this year). Carnia is solid Nazi, so a dash to Yugoslavia — 150 miles — is none too good. So it looks like north or south. North, to fall back with the Nazis when they retreat from Italy and take up this Line; south, to try to filter through and meet the Allies when they advance. Either possibility isn't bad. But the best one is, of course, the end of the war before the Nazis move back here in force. That's what I'm hoping for.

No matter what, it may be some time after the Armistice before I get out to wire you — having to hide and linger around awhile before showing myself. So that's why I'm writing this — the family here will mail it with the Armistice.

The mission (called Mercury Eagle) has already paid for itself and been a success. We got a lot more accomplished than anyone thought possible. If Smitty is okay, everything is all right; and I have high hopes for the future. Luck has really played a big part, with countless hairbreadth escapes from Mr. Hitler's animals, and universal success in whatever we undertook. It's only regretted that we did not get even more support from Rome, for opportunities were boundless in August and September.

It would be a lie for me to say that this has been an adventure or good time for me. True, at times there have been light moments, a few; and at other times the work has been long and exhausting. I've seen more gorgeous scenery than three men will in a lifetime — sunrises and sunsets among the peaks, moonlight glimmering on glaciers, storms swirling around tremendous pillars of rock, cataracts, forest glades, ancient villages. But full enjoyment is not truly there when you are on eternal guard against guns appearing behind every rock and shadow. The "threat" never leaves you, asleep or awake; and I

have not yet lain down to sleep without a cocked pistol at my right hand.

In a land where you regularly have to hike and climb 11 miles to reach a point only 3 miles away by road, there's usually more to occupy the mind than breathless vistas of beauty. You are usually "breathless" from the close acquaintance with the bare bone and sinews that make up this magnificent scenery.

It has not been sport, but rather a deadly business — an unending struggle to plan each tiny detail for days ahead, when you really don't know what's going to happen in the next fifteen minutes. If you make the slightest error, someone dies; I found that out quickly. It seems as though life and death have been in my hands since this started, for as the only representative of law and order wherever I've gone, I have had to sit as judge at trials of criminals and spies; to determine the fate of prisoners taken; to issue orders for the general good that meant violence to someone along the line before they were consummated. It was the one feature of this job I did not foresee, and would have avoided with all my heart. I have saved many, many lives that would otherwise have been lost — Nazi prisoners, circumstantial cases, petty cases — for the law of the partisans before I arrived was death for anything, or anyone, shady. But for the rest, and for my mistakes — well, I guess I've forgotten how to smile.

Militarily, I've thought of it as a game of chess, with the whole Alps as a board, whereon you try to outguess the enemy and move always into a square where he won't come. The feeling of being hunted is something that can never leave you; it's very tiring, and requires fierce self-control when you have so much else that requires the best sense and judgment you can exert. This village of Andrich happens to be a square where Mr. Nazi won't think of looking for a while.

If there has been any recompense for us, it has come, not from the scenery, but from the reactions of the people — persecuted, starved, and enslaved by the Nazi. We've been able to bring them medicines; a few of the comforts of life (cigarettes, coffee, sugar); a little money; but mostly *hope*. There's nothing anyone will ever be able to say or show that will make me think there's anything good about a German. The atrocities are true; I've seen them; and they're universal. Villages burned, children hanged, men tortured, old people turned out in the snow, civilians shot for sport — I've seen those things with my own eyes. These hideous acts yield a crop of men whose fury knows no bounds — they make up the partisan bands I've helped to organize; they're the sword of God, if there ever has been one in history.

If any of you ever travel to these parts in the future, don't be afraid to mention my name. It's known from one end of the Alps to the other (a fame far out of proportion to what I've been able to do).

You'll receive hospitality undreamed of, assuming you're in the little inns and with the real inhabitants.

This job hasn't been world-shaking and may never be recorded even in Army records. But I've told about it so that you will know that, even if it hasn't been as much as many, many others have done in this war, at least I've done something. In my last report by radio to Rome I was able to say:

"Have organized 6 battalions and 4 intelligence nets. Have blown 14 highway bridges and 3 railroad bridges. Have organized 1600 square miles of Alps, and distributed arms therein. Have led 3 attacks. Have sent over 300 intelligence reports."

January 1, 1945

There wasn't much chance to wish you all the Season's Greetings, but you know I was thinking about you, each and every one. Base Headquarters 'way down in southern Italy advised me they had sent you a letter in my behalf. I hope it got to you in time to make Christmas free of doubt and worry. That's one big, tough trouble with this game — the secrecy.

My Christmas was mostly work, of the unpleasant, desperate kind. The night of December 23 I got word in my shack HQ up on the side of a mountain which looks like Bartlett Mountain that the Air Corps had made a drop of supplies for us the day before 6 miles down a valley toward a big Todt camp. Next morning, before dawn, we started off on skis to pick up the boodle. It was strictly a race between us and Mr. Nazi, as he knew all about the drop by then of course.

We went up over Fernazza Pass at about 6800 feet and swooped down the valley to the drop zone. I got the peasants to help and we got all the supplies out of the danger zone by noon, on sleds. No Nazis in sight — only a ski patrol of two men who blundered in as we were working. I scared them away by making faces and other threatening gestures. Maybe they figured I was German, in this paratroop uniform — anyway, no one unfriendly came around afterward.

Once the crisis was passed I succumbed to a heavy fever and decided to rest in the village near by, Nazi or no Nazi. So with the local Hitlerites digging the jive at a dance hall a mile and a half down the road, I spent a delightful Christmas Eve with an old friend, the Countess. Cookies, tea, apples — and at midnight candles on the tree. We talked about our respective families so far away. By morning the fever was gone and I left to follow the men.

The Countess has been my link with the Nazis. She's Swiss or Argentinian, or something — anyway, neutral; and a confidante of the Nazi Political Administrator for Belluno Province. This bird, Dr. Lauer, runs around in a Farnum automobile with a bodyguard of thirty Nazi toughs. Through the Countess I've been working on him and have him to the point where he's neutral! At least he and the

Countess agreed over the phone to delay the official report of the drop until after Christmas; that's what gave us time enough to salvage the supplies! I sent Lauer a message — that I'd guarantee his personal security any time he wanted to take a powder and escape the Gestapo. I understand he laughed and said right now I was the one to watch out.

Also on my hook is the local chief of the Gestapo! When the Nazis picked up a couple of Limeys and one of our head civilian officials in the Comitato of National Liberation, we persuaded this Gestapo man to rig up a fake prison escape for them. I realize "You can't do business with Hitler," but in this game you sometimes have to. This sounds like storybook stuff, but actually it's rather prosaic. They're all worried over their own skins, and it's just a matter of picking on the ones who are most worried — and most useful. I've become something of a myth to them — "the American who has been here five months that no one can catch," so that helps. They're all so frightened they cling to anything that looks good.

Well, since my last letter (now reposing in a bottle under 5 feet of snow) there's been a lot of hard work. If the war continues I'll have buried bottles all over the Alps, for many of my maps and secret documents are so cached.

I left Andrich November 17 and went up over the flank of Marmolada Peak again to rejoin the Brigade. An exhausting trip of thirteen hours. Have to use this route to avoid the big Nazi garrison at Alleghe. A request had arrived asking me to blow out the Cortina railroad. I had just 40 pounds of plastic, but figured I could get into the machinery of the electric substation at Cortina. We made the plans. And a couple of nights later the Fascist Secret Service picked up one of my key men! Under threat of torture he turned yellow and led Nazi patrols to the hiding places of eleven of his men. Two nights after that he returned with twenty Nazis to the house where I was staying, but of course I had cleared out. They beat up my hosts, an elderly couple, and stole all the food, but did not burn the house down — their usual custom. This man, Tell, was then told to write down all he knew — it took him five days — so now the Nazis have the complete goods on me. This plays in my favor, as now I can play in the open without the bother of airtight secrecy. Tell found he could *not* do business with Hitler: they're going to shoot him without trial. Worst feature of all this was that Tell also handed over to Jerry all the plastic, thus delaying the R.R. job.

We set up Brigade HQ at Fontana Fredda — which means "Cold Fountain" — a cow barn in a hidden basin which used to be one of Civetta's glaciers. The night of November 25 a plane came over at 3.30 A.M., but I had my suspicions and told the men *not* to light the signal fires. It was a tough decision to make. Next day we packed up and moved 5 miles to another cowshed, this one under

the big glacier on Mount Pelmo. Name was "Fiorentina," which means "Little Flower Meadow"; but it was just another icicle shop to us. Very cold with 5 feet of snow. An hour after we moved, three groups of Nazis appeared over the rim of the basin at Fontana Fredda; they were investigating the plane business. Seeing a dead camp, they came no nearer to investigate, which was lucky.

Then for three weeks we made the trip every night to Fontana Fredda to have a crew always ready in case of a drop. It was tough work for me without skis the first week: 10 miles a night in 2 feet of loose snow. Finally Ettore, the Brigade Commander, found some skis.

About December 15 we heard that the Nazis were going to send a big force into the area to try to pick us up. So we moved again, to the hut deep in the forest up on the side of Mount Fernazza. We still manned the drop zone every night. I had had word from Rome December 12 which promised an immediate drop from fighter bombers. But by December 23 I figured the deal had fallen through. The men were in bad shape from all the work; we had influenza, dysentery, frostbite, and bloody feet. So at 4 P.M. I made the decision that all must go home. I promised to try to get a radio and said maybe in a month we could start work again. They did not want to quit, but I knew that their weakened condition was too dangerous for the situation. They sang *La Montanara* ("The Mountain Girl") for me, most beautiful of all the Alpini songs, and which always brings tears to my eyes. Then they trailed out into the dusk. An hour later, as I was gloomily contemplating the fire alone, a courier stumbled in the door and said there had been a *day* drop by five fighter planes the day before.

We got mortars, funny papers, machine guns, soap, carbines, cigarettes, explosives, and a pile of assorted stuff. One was a very special secret item made by the Automatic Signal Corporation, which will be an enormous help to us, saving hours and hours of work and much danger! It was a great Christmas for everybody.

We hid all the drop material and scattered to hide and wait and see what the Nazis would do about it. To date, they haven't done anything!

I went off alone to duck into my den in Andrich, and made the trip up over Marmolada again with skis. This time I froze both feet literally as hard as boards. It was on a stretch of 1000 yards up a concave north slope where the sun does not hit. Snow was 5 feet deep and absolutely loose all the way to the bottom. It took me five and one-half hours to make that 1000 yards, even with skis. I'm getting a bit fed up with that Marmolada trip.

Have been in bed for a week with feet packed in grease. Feeling has returned and it looks like good luck again. In bed, I designed a newspaper which the CNL is going to print for the entire Alps area. Also, directed search parties for three bomber crews

who bailed out over here the other day. We've found only two men of them, but I hope to get the others before the Nazis do. Expect to rejoin the Brigade for the attack on Cortina in a couple of days. I know where the HQ for the Jap Secret Service is hiding there, and believe I will hand them a New Year's present to improve friendly relations — a 50-pound time bomb. The little brown brothers will no doubt be annoyed to see their dinner table sailing through the roof one evening soon around 8 P.M. But, then, they always were ungrateful for free presents from us.

Maybe in my next I can give you a more exciting installment — this past period has been mostly hard work and heartbreak. Oh yes — the plane which hovered over our drop zone that morning of November 25 was Fascist, sent out as a decoy! Probably loaded with bombs, which was not what we were waiting for, exactly. So the fateful decision was right, after all.

You've probably heard that my captaincy came through December 7, the anniversary of Pearl Harbor. If you're interested in ribbons and such stuff: I've picked up three "Action" stars on the Italian Campaign ribbon and will probably get the Purple Heart — deaf in my right ear from a shell blast and had my left wrist scratched up by fragments; like the feet, minor things anyone could get, but they seem to hand out medals for nothing these days.

If this war doesn't end soon, I'm going to register for voting up here. I've grown and shaved off five mustaches out of sheer boredom. My Italian — incorporating all the bad grammar of my teachers and innumerable cuss words — is quite fluent. The French is more grammatical, but suffers from a lack of profanity.

Well, family, I hope I beat this letter home. Friends are going to mail you my map case, which contains diary and other things.

January 12, 1945

If I ever get out of this mess, I will be the softest touch in the country for soul-saving organizations for fifty years. I am in what you might call a strategic gopher-hole which gives off all the signs of being a baby volcano before long.

This is a very temper-reducing spot, because at any hour of the night or day I could practice pin-wheel bulls on any number of Krauts and probably get away with it, but for strategic reasons I am forced to keep such nocturnal high jinks to a reasonable minimum. By now I have organized and commanded five separate battalions of partisans, with an individual life history of about four bridge jobs (demolitions) and one smart engagement. Then they kind of dissolve. The staying power of the Italian is not notable.

God knows why I ever deserted my old sour-faced sergeants and drunken shavetails for this rat-tailed

life of attacking crack Nazi troops with squads of tattered Romeos at my rear, but I had the idea the effort might have a helpful effect on the war in this particular area. Which is where I got good and fooled, because no sooner had I succeeded in blowing up everything in sight and closing every route through the Alps from the Brenner to Yugoslavia than the damn front in Italy stopped moving, and it has been sitting on its broad bottom ever since. Jerry has been after me ever since and the humor of the situation sometimes gets a little thin. Those squareheads must be nearsighted as owls, because I keep running across their patrols by accident and nothing happens. When they really start to pour on the heat to bag me in some town or other, naturally I ain't thar. It's a very boring life.

Anyhow, out of all the various battalions, brigades, squadrons, and armies which I've organized (and seen die), I've finally picked a bunch of ex-ncoms from the Alpine troops. They don't come any better. We're all on skis and go slishing over the snowfields and passes like the Finns. Jerry has enough respect for us so that the last time one of his spies tipped him off as to the whereabouts of one squad (4 men) he sent up two full companies to grab it. The Boches trailed over the mountains in long files for several days, and the boys tracked them with machine guns from vantage points — just for practice. Can't do any shooting at the moment. All the Boches got for their efforts was cold toes.

With the experience I'm getting I can manage a revolution in any climate, with "irregulars" from Hottentots to Eskimos. The psychology of the unofficial militia is easy: caldrons of hot spicy food; an eternal bait of high praise; and damn little free time to get in trouble with. Boy, are they happy that way! For engagements you pick the little meek guys. I tried it with the big swaggering "heroes" — after the fireworks start and you look around to lay on some of those OCS platoon tactics, they're only about 2 per cent of 'em in sight, and that's because they've got their feet caught in a stump or something. This is very discouraging.

So next time you leave them home to wash the dishes, dropping some kind remark about "needing the strength in the reserve for this one."

The Alpini are good men. We're shaping up for something pretty big. As for the former deals, you've probably seen or heard all about 'em, although my identity was well camouflaged. The radio has carried the story several times.

But hell knows if we'll ever get this mission through. Looks like a baby volcano for sure: to wit, Kesselring will move back to the Alps here soon and you can't do much when you are plunk in the middle of their damned battle line — that is, not for more than about twenty minutes; and my function, among other things, is to live, if possible. If there were two of us, it might be different. Oh

well, as I say now, I'll cross that mountain chain when I get to it! Maybe I can get out, if the Teutonic population gets too numerous.

If not, I'll be saying good-bye and thanks for giving me life. I've made mistakes and haven't got very far as standards usually go, but no one can say I haven't done a lot of things with that life, or enjoyed it.

With his feet in such bad condition, Steve should have remained in hiding, but at this point he received orders from his Commanding Officer in Florence to blow up the hydroelectric plant in Cortina. He set off in a heavy snowstorm very late on the night of January 25, on skis and carrying the heavy demolition charge. Ettore, the leader of the Val Cordevole Brigade, was supposed to accompany him, but Stephen would not allow this because, he said, if both were killed the Brigade would have no leader. Hence Steve set off alone on his dangerous mission. Very early on the morning of January 26 a game warden found him unconscious in the forest near the church in Cortina d'Ampezzo; both feet were frozen and swollen and his shoes were missing. He could neither complete his mission nor escape. The warden took him to his house — and then went out immediately and notified the Fascist police, in order to claim the reward offered for delivering up enemy soldiers. The Austrian, Tell, at one time one of Stephen's most trusted men, but really a spy, identified him.

Stephen was taken to Verona and then to Bolzano, where the SS officers tortured him for two weeks in an attempt to force from him information of OSS activities in northern Italy. They beat him brutally, tying his wrists to his ankles first, and also used electrodes in his ears and nostrils. They could not break him down. Failing in their attempts, they hanged him with a rope tied to a steam pipe. This criminal act was in direct violation of the Geneva Convention, as Captain Hall was in full parachute uniform and should have been held as a prisoner of war.

On January 9 to 15, 1946, the four officers accused of his death were tried before an American Military Commission in Naples, Italy. Three were sentenced to be hanged and one to life imprisonment. The three men were executed on July 26, 1946. Tell, who wrote out a full confession, was shot when he tried to escape.

The Legion of Merit and the *Croix de Guerre avec Palme* were posthumously awarded to Captain Hall. In a letter to his mother his Commanding Officer, Major Judson B. Smith, spoke for all when he wrote: "It is inconceivable how he survived so long in his single-handed operation so far away from anyone he could really trust or even talk to. . . . Believe me when I say that Stephen's words are written into the hearts of all who knew him, including many loyal Italians who fought with us."



Educator, biographer, and poet, HOWARD MUMFORD JONES is a native of Michigan who has taught at the University of Texas, at Chapel Hill, and at the University of Michigan. Since 1936 he has been Professor of English at Harvard, and he is the author of many books and articles. Atlantic readers will recall his part in the debate on "The Withering of New England" in our April, 1950, issue, but he now discerns a new social phenomenon which seems to be national rather than regional in scope.

A CASE OF PLIGHT

by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

I WISH to discuss the secret of the modern literary movement. The secret, the inwardness, of this movement is Plight. Plight is something that has occurred during an era of history known as In Our Time. I am a little confused as to the exact limits of this epoch, except that it is Since. Some writers say it is Since T. S. Eliot, and some writers say it is Since Hiroshima, and still others say it is Since Kierkegaard. A good friend of mine says it is Since the Duration. It seems to me simpler just to say Since.

The chief characteristic of Modern Man during the period known as In Our Time, or Since, is Plightness. Almost everybody has Plight in one form or another, though perhaps only our better writers are fully aware of the extent and nature of the disease. For example, the more serious essayists in our English departments are quite excited over something they call The Plight of the Artist In Our Time, or Since. It appears that In Our Time writers have been more unhappy than ever before, even than they were during the days of Lord Byron. This is because they are living Since. A writer who was living before Since was patronized by the nobility, and this made him happy. He sent his children to the better schools and he was received into the bosom of the prevailing church. He had no Conflict, but on the other hand he was capable of Wholeness or tragic depth, whereas writers after Since have been unable to find any tragic depth. This is why they are unhappy. They do not find Meaning.

Plightness, however, is by no means confined to authors, though courses in Creative Plightness are devoted to helping them in writers' conferences and symposiums In Our Time. American women also suffer Plight. When they baked all the bread at home, and did the washing, and bore a child every nine months, and knitted stockings, and em-

broidered slippers for the vicar, Plightness was not known, but now that they are pretty much free to do as they please, and even to read James Jones's *From Here to Eternity*, they have taken up Plight. The Plight of modern woman Since the Duration is awful. All kinds of women suffer from it, and not just opera singers, as used to be the case. Nowadays stenographers (especially if they work in advertising agencies), young wives, divorcées, schoolteachers, and even Dorothy Dix have Plight. Miss Dix is of the opinion that after Since, the women have had a tough time of it holding their own. Or holding their men. On the other hand, the colleges, especially the women's colleges, have done what they could. They prepare young girls for Plight, and then, when their alumnae marry and have children and get fat, and their husbands finally descend from the nuptial Plight to golf and national conventions, the middle-aged women have nothing to do, what with dishwashers and one thing or another. The colleges have therefore set up extracurricular courses known as Plight Education. Others offer the Great Books, or Plight across the centuries.

However, even businessmen do not escape the general epidemic. Ever since *Babbitt* and *The Great Gatsby*, it has been clear that the American businessman is really in Plight. Some of our more historical novelists look back upon the wholesome days of Benjamin Franklin with a sort of envy, and I do not find much evidence of Plightness as late as the days of the Erie Canal, when a businessman had a good deal of fun renting out tow horses and watching fist fights. The Plight of the businessman has all happened Since.

Speaking of *From Here to Eternity*, I ought to point out that Plight has also infected the armed forces. Here and there a general exhibits Plight, but Plightness is really endemic among commis-

sioned officers in the lower echelons, and is also invading the ranks, although corporals and sergeants are pretty well immunized against it, from living in the regular army In Our Time. It is still confined to the ground forces, or so I suppose, because our novelists have not reported on the navy. However, a few appointees from civilian life like Mr. Roberts may prove to be the Typhoid Marys of Plightness on the high seas.

Ministers and professors, of course, have been sunk in Plight for a long time — from even before the Duration. However, poets nowadays suffer from a new and interesting form of this malady. This symptom is something known as Tension and Release, but it is also somehow connected with Texture and Density. A truly modern poet, who has been writing Since, is also almost certain to exhibit not only Texture and Density, but Ambiguity as well. Ambiguity calls for a good deal of skillful diagnosis In Our Time. This diagnosis is known as Insight.

Since the Duration, of course, there has also been a great amount of Plightness among the other arts. A good many painters are currently suffering from it, and their form of suffering seems to come from not being understood. The reason

they are in Plight — that is, not appreciated — is principally that the picture speaks for itself. It requires no explanation, which is literary. Its pictorialness (“paintiness”) is all there is to it. This is Plight. Musicians Since have much the same sort of trouble. Their music is Absolute. As paintings must be seen with the noncosmological eye, so music must be heard by the noncosmological ear, and when you listen to it, you find it has Design, but not necessarily Traditional Form. This is Plight.

There is of course much more to be said about Plightness, which is widely diffused, as in the Plight of economic man, the Plight of the modern church, the Plight of parenthood (parents confront an enigmatic being called The Child, and this almost invariably brings on a case of Plight), and the Plight of the non-Communist left, which is the most serious form of Plightness that has appeared in public Since. On the whole, however, these forms of Plight can be subsumed under the general rubric of the Plight of Modern Man (or the Western World). Of course, Hamlet was made to say something about man being noble in reason, yet the quintessence of dust, but that was not Since. Nor was it In Our Time.



SO MUCH DEW

by DANIEL SARGENT

So much dew, so much too much too much dew,
Gentling the lawn the dawn comes visitor to! —
There's not a grass-blade that's not ringing, ringing
With silver bells, — jewels to jewels clinging.
I had expected some few sober spare
Teardrops on this squirrels' thoroughfare,
This marching-ground for ants, this green pavilion
Awning the moles, that robins piccadilly on.
But this immense bright silveriness, this sea
Thrown brilliant on the clover's beggary!
One could almost imagine, surmise, gather
That heaven had come to earth, or kissed it rather,
Or even entertain a thought as odd
As that to a village maid descended God.



*That Civilization is playing out the last act of an inescapable Greek tragedy is a notion which Brooks Adams, the American historian, proclaimed fifty-five years ago in his book *The Law of Civilization and Decay*. The same dark prophecy was heard in Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, and more recently Arnold Toynbee has contemplated it in his *Study of History*. But how much truth is there in this fatalism? asks LOVELL THOMPSON, the Boston essayist and publisher long associated with Houghton, Mifflin.*

PROGRESS AND DECLINE

by LOVELL THOMPSON

I

DECLINE and fall." The words have threatened us with increasing insistence ever since Gibbon wrote them into a title over one hundred and fifty years ago. First there was a premonition that the pattern of the failure of Rome might somehow be applied to a later day. Then with Lord Acton's familiar phrase, "Power corrupts," premonition became more explicit. Thus word by word a terror and an idea grew until now it stands before us a fully developed thesis — deterministic, appalling, convincing. Yet as time unrolls the carpet of events it becomes possible to see that we are not quite sticking to the apocalyptic schedule. Moreover, there seem to be some aspects of decline that are distinctly tolerable; and that in turn begins to make us wonder just what the distinction is between progress and decline.

During the last fifty years a lot has been said about the evolution of history and a science has been formulated which has brought us to the border of a new understanding of ourselves and a new understanding of our destiny. The science is the science of history; which as at present constituted suggests that civilizations, like men, grow old and die.

It was Brooks Adams who, about 1895, first undertook the dark journey toward the ends of knowledge and set down a description of the cycle of human society in a book entitled *The Law of Civilization and Decay*. He pictured society as ruled in its formative stages by fear, and in its final stages by greed. Fear and greed brought about the consolidation of peoples into societies by military and economic means which ultimately became self-consuming, thus achieving an end to integration and a redispersal of people upon the land. Brooks discussed the writing of his book at length with his brother Henry, who found its pessimism congenial. It was Henry who gave the new study a name —

the science of history — and it was he also who foresaw the danger that would beset it. His fear and doubt are described in an astonishingly prophetic passage which was written in 1893 and which is here sharply abridged: —

If this science pointed to a socialistic triumph, would society as now constituted tolerate the open assertion which should affirm its overthrow? If on the other hand the new science required us to announce that huge armaments, advancing materialism, declining arts, were to be continued, exaggerated, no one would listen with satisfaction. If finally society must revert to absolute faith and a revealed religion, it commits suicide.

Henry's interest continued throughout his life. His two greatest books, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* and *The Education* were odd secret elaborations of Brooks's thought.

Brooks Adams's book was a hasty sketch of the new idea. The major statement of the thesis comes from Oswald Spengler. The Adamses were dazzling and distressed. Spengler was terrified and perverse and greatly gifted. His approach is more vague, more mystical, and more illuminating than that of Adams. He gives to each civilization a personality shaped by the land of its birth. In Spengler's view, when this personality has attained full expression it dies in the last analysis from a lack of purpose. Under the discipline of his magic, the rise of the pyramids, the death of Rome, the chaos of China, and the mystery of the Dark Ages become logical links in an inevitable chain of events.

Since Spengler much has been written about the cycle of civilization, but the first book to achieve Spengler's breadth of view and at the same time a real breadth of distribution was the one-volume abridgment of Arnold J. Toynbee's *Study of History*. The essential contribution that Toynbee

makes to the Adams-Spengler thesis is the suggestion that what Spengler has pictured as a single personality might better be thought of as a family group, having a family likeness but many lives.

The author of the *Study of History* seems to be a bit like the bird that is supposed to clean the crocodile's teeth. He goes through history from tooth to tooth with such a fine assiduity that the great, grim conclusion never bites him. He is not resigned to destruction like Brooks Adams; he does not revel in it like Spengler; he suspends judgment for the next volume.

The absolute value of any philosophy is a thing to be doubted. It is suspect as a cover-up for the errors of the age rather than the matrix of events. Today we are in some need of a rationale with which to face the possibility of despair, and at least one thing can be said with assurance about the deterministic outlook to which the scientists of history incline: it relieves the individual psyche of responsibility. Moreover, time has now begun to demonstrate a kind of eerie relevancy in the vision of progress which Brooks beheld when he looked out upon the twentieth century from the shelter of the nineteenth, and which through later philosophers of history has come at last to popular consideration.

Ever since the first white blackbird was pecked to death, there has been instinctive resistance to the new idea. The science of history, as Henry Adams pointed out, offered little that men would willingly believe, and the difficulty of acceptance has been aggravated by a disfiguring murkiness in all the presentations.

The scientists of history have employed an anthropomorphic terminology and the pathetic fallacy in the exposition of their findings. They have described the abstraction of the body politic in terms which can only apply to quaking flesh. Taken in by their own melodrama, they have been led on to use the false analogy of the diseases of deterioration and irregular old age to describe a process which must be assumed to be natural if it is to be assumed at all. Finally, they have supposed that a society may be valued only in terms of its monuments, which is in all probability to judge the individuals of which it is composed by their frustrations rather than by their fulfillments.

2

BECAUSE the whole argument has been emotionally off its feet since the beginning, it has wanted calm evaluation by ordinary men. We have been fascinated by the latter-day Isaiahs whose prophecy seemed half fulfilled; but none can read them without a sense of desolation, and neither the deep resignation of Brooks Adams nor the moralistic quaver of Arnold Toynbee will assuage the empty nightmare fear.

A science of history is to some extent an art of prophecy, and so to the same extent events today are proving or disproving the validity of such a science. Let us attempt to check the prophecies of the scientists against the state of the world today.

Brooks Adams felt that in Rome the engineer and the slave had replaced the craftsman: "They first ran up a cheap core of rubble . . . afterwards veneered with marble." To one who lived with the pretentious mansions of fifty years ago that may have seemed an answer for America also. It doesn't seem like the whole story now. The welder forty stories in the air cementing the steel joints of a skyscraper is not the slave that Brooks Adams saw. The great private houses of Mr. Adams's day are falling into ruin now or being taken over by the charitable tax-exempt. In their place the universal small house breeds in every meadow.

About the small house Toynbee, on the other hand, has a phrase that is more appropriate. It is, "standardization through disintegration." His picture is of a society losing its coherence and preparing to return to its original simple pattern of individual units. Yet for those who have not heard it called "disintegration," the servantless little house with television and washing machines and flowers and equality might look almost idyllic. Prophecy seems to have gone beyond coincidence, but somehow fallen short of truth.

The small house on wheels presents another aspect of decline. Nothing in Brooks Adams's cosmogony provided for the trailer. Child of the ship's cabin and the tepee, the prairie schooner and pullman, the trailer might easily have been seen by a prophet gazing into a crystal ball. But if Mr. Adams had seen it, with ivy at its window, plying demurely at the heels of its roadmaster upon the broad black strip with its white center line stretching geometrically to the vanishing point on the horizon, he might have been excused for not understanding in 1890 just what it was that he saw.

On the other hand, in Spengler's vision, two decades later, there is a space where the trailer would look almost inevitable:—

Infinite space is the ideal that the Western world has always striven to find. Dramas like that of the emigration to America—man by man, each in his own account, driven by deep promptings to loneliness—or the Spanish Conquest, or the California gold rush, dramas or uncontrollable longings for freedom, solitude, immense independence and of giant-like contempt of all limitations whatsoever upon the home feeling. No other culture, not even the Chinese, knows them. . . . We see emerging everywhere the prime symbol, Limitless Space.

In Toynbee's vision there is room for the trailer only between chapters, but his thinking is consistent with the pattern that the trailer suggests. One feels that it would be important to him to know the motive of the driver and the waterer of

the ivy. Are they, in short, rats who are leaving the ship because it is run by incompetent men, or are they men who leave the ship because it has been infested by overcompetent rats? Are these proletarian founders of a new society or betrayers of an old? Most probably Toynbee would regard the couple in the trailer as members of an internal proletariat fleeing disaster.

An external proletariat is in Toynbee's view made up of half-digested immigrant groups — the overcompetent rats — whose customs color the culture of the land of their adoption. Today, the music to which we dance no longer springs from sources indigenous to our culture. It finds its inspiration in the barbarian days of other cultures from Central Africa to the South Pacific. To Toynbee, this phenomenon is "barbarization by contact with an external proletariat"; and that, says Toynbee further, is an example of the "receptivity of the dominant minority in a disintegrating society."

He was not the only one to make the point: —

Although the monied aristocracy remained supreme down to the final disintegration of the West, emigration began very early to modify the base of society, by the injection of a considerable amount of imaginative blood.

Thus Brooks Adams, in the nineties, appears also to suggest the African source of tin-pan alley and the advent of Irving Berlin, but he is speaking of the reign of Claudius. Spengler confirms the findings of his colleagues: "The end is a sunset reflected in forms revived for a moment by pedant or eclectic. . . . We today are in this condition — playing a tedious game with dead forms to keep up the illusion of a living art."

So we disintegratees discover that Rodgers and Hammerstein are chanting a vespers song in the enchanted evening of a most unusual day. Perhaps this is true. There is indeed a curious relevance, and yet even in anthropomorphic terms there seems to be something to be said for disintegration. The grace of cultural humility — the gift of being able to accept beauty in other cultures — may be the rich recompense of fading strength. Now at last we may be set free in some measure of the egoism and frustration of youth. The sunset is more beautiful than the dawn. Progress and decline seem to merge.

Mr. Toynbee's abridger has supplied at the back of his book a most careful summary-outline of the whole. From it let us take a single sentence which seems consistent with the two elder seers and which will serve to carry us forward to what, for many of us, now replaces art and literature: —

Vulgarity and Barbarism in Art is the price commonly paid for the abnormally wide diffusion of the art of a disintegrating civilization.

Examples of vulgarity and barbarism in art are all about us. The pseudo-primitivism of a James Thurber or a Grant Wood or the animated cartoons of Walt Disney or a piece of sculpture of Gaston Lachaise is no less than a rendering of the sorry fix in which we find ourselves by men who are caught in the slack tide of cultural development and have been forced to make novelty replace progression.

Against this background, such a major expression of our age as the modern picture magazine is seen to be a profoundly sinister symptom. It reveals the standardless eclecticism of our taste. This condition is what Toynbee refers to in ringing polysyllables as the "nemesis of creativity: Idolization of an ephemeral self."

Yet do we really expect to achieve universal education without building up the mean at the expense of the extremes; and is that bad? So much that is good, so much that we have sought so long, now is set forth to us as the symptom of death and decay — it makes us wonder if all the angles are being covered. Knowledge is progress, progress is growth, growth postulates death. Is it just like that?

3

WHEN the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be"; virtue and "health" may not be one. The only good society may be an aged and ailing one. Perhaps it is not a moral equivalent for war that we need. It may be a peaceful equivalent for morals. Passion spent is such an equivalent. That is what Brooks's devil in Massachusetts told him. That is the inference in Spengler's work, and finally that is what Toynbee declines to face, when he poses an immortal society based on Christian faith. Let us continue to check our progress toward boundless death against the storm charts of our despondent pilots.

Brooks Adams, for example, seemed to foresee one of the great social changes of our day: —

As the pressure of economic competition intensifies with social consolidation, the family regularly disintegrates, the children rejecting the parental authority at a steadily decreasing age.

With such a note as this, the whole new mushroom crop of infants lullabyed to dreamland by the radio, of delinquent children and of teen-age tasters of forbidden sweets, comes into focus as a new and mighty cast of flightless nestlings, dropped prematurely from their cradles, squawking and croaking for food and diversion in the undergrowth of society. Other corroborative examples of the creeping death spring up on every hand. Yet are our children really more uncared for than Goldilocks or Cinderella or Cuchulainn or Oliver Twist or even Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn? Moreover, if the Prince and the Pauper were to

meet today they would have more than their faces in common. They would have a common tongue of box scores and Bob Hope cracks, for both are nurtured at the single mighty breast of TV. Then hasn't something new occurred on which the prophets did not quite set the proper value? This new expanding freedom of communication is one of the privileges of decay, one of the beauties of the "abnormally wide diffusion of art."

Consider so homely a thing as the modern department store — certainly one of the greatest monuments to materialism ever raised by an expiring society. It stands like a pyramid looking up and down the ages for its equal.

All of our philosophers foresaw the weekday plight of the assembly-line slave but not the weekend joy with which he mass-consumes that which he mass-produced, for mass consumption *must* accompany mass production. Who buys the paint and the power saws, the hand cultivators and the larkspur seed, and the manuals of instruction? Some theorist should puzzle over the fearful and simple springtime joy that perfumes the hardware counters and the model kitchens. May it not be the seed of a new freedom from guilt?

Brooks Adams suggests that it becomes cheaper to import labor than to breed it when the peak of economic competition is reached. However, when you consider the recent change in the tax law permitting the division of income between husband and wife, you see that government has set a heavy price upon the carefree and loveless life — the wife, if not the children, becomes a fiscal necessity. Our lawns can be cut by the fruit of marriage at a positive profit. For the moment at least the income tax is providing us with a relative freedom from privilege.

Growth toward death, virtue only for the ailing knowledge that binds, a peaceful equivalent for morals, spending your way out of depression, all are merely different statements of a reversal of values that occurs when society arrives at the top of the divide on its wheels of progress and begins to roll forward down the other side. May it not be easier to hold ourselves back than to urge ourselves forward? Washing machines, radio audiences, income taxes; these are techniques new to history. They must affect the terms of our decline. We have failed to realize what every child with a sled well knows — the technique for taking a flexible flyer up hill is not the same as for taking it down.

In one way or another it is the reign of reason that the anatomists of history fear: —

In the last stage of consolidation, the economic, and perhaps the scientific intellect, is propagated.
— BROOKS ADAMS

Then style fades out honey-combed with intellect, fragile, ready for self-destruction. — OSWALD SPENGLER

Philosophy discourages those who feel its attractions from throwing themselves into missionary work on its behalf. — ARNOLD TOYNBEE

The three wise men suddenly turn up naked and trembling in the light of their own brilliance. Is intellect then a poison so to be feared?

We cannot advance without thinking — without whittling down the precious ingredient of progress which is ignorance. It is ignorance — that is, something more to learn, a vacuum to be filled — that has moved the world. Each man for himself and devil take the foremost. It is ignorance that blinds the wise to the folly of power, and ignorance that teaches the less wise to accept starvation. If ignorance is vanquished what wise man can there be so complacent as to accept responsibility for another's destiny, what fool so foolish as to trust his in another's hands? In such a world absolute vice becomes the ruler and again we have the reversal of the rules: Corruption confers power, absolute corruption absolute power.

Clearly intellect is not of itself a thing to be feared but rather the surrounding evils which intellect will not stoop to extirpate. Yet it must be remembered that intellect now has new tools. Now the question comes, Is man to abjure reason and intellect merely to outlive the ice age like the turtle?

4

WE HAVE been trying to check prophecy against events and we have found some inconsistencies. We have already seen how the ideals of our time become the symptoms of decay under the frosty touch of such a phrase as "the abnormally wide diffusion of art in a disintegrating society" and this again suggests that the great monuments of history are monuments of frustration; "challenge and response" is what Toynbee calls it. Let us then consider two great monuments of our own time which, if they are monuments, are monuments of frustration and seem to indicate that "decline" whether it be desirable or otherwise is not indubitably at hand. These monuments are the Empire State Building and the Atomic Bomb.

First then, the Empire State. Remember the apparently materialistic impulse that fired its rocket-like spring toward heaven and the beautiful severity of its steel skeleton as it first rose out of the chaos of New York style; and remember the inappropriate passage from Brooks Adams on Roman architecture, "They first ran up a cheap core of rubble." Now remember its acres of windows catching the horizontal sun or glowing in the winter dusk: —

The window as architecture is peculiar to the Faustian soul, and the most significant symbol of its depth experience. In it can be felt the will to emerge into the boundless.

That is Spengler speaking of the early Gothic, and Henry Adams: —

You must try first to rid your mind of the traditional idea that Gothic is an intentional expression of religious gloom. The necessity for light was the motive of the Gothic architects. They needed light and always more light until they sacrificed safety and common sense in trying to get it.

And now at last think of the mighty shaft capped with its idle mooring mast and read in the last paragraph of *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*: —

Of all the elaborate symbolism which has been suggested for the Gothic cathedral, the most vital and most perfect may be the slender nervure . . . the visible effort to throw off a visible strain — never let us forget that faith alone supports it, and that, if faith fails, Heaven is lost.

Spengler says that in a disintegrating society “Worldly arts drive out the great art of developed stone. . . . The artist appears, and ‘plans’ what formerly grew.” That may have been true when Gustave Eiffel designed his tower or when Richardson designed Henry Adams’s Washington mansion. Chartres Cathedral and the skyscrapers of New York are alike anonymous accretions of circumstance.

Ever since Gibbon, classical Rome has been used as the historical counterpart of our own time. Brooks Adams mentioned it and Spengler particularly regarded New York as an expression of megalomania and megalomania at a stage when culture had ceased to develop and could only expand in size without changing in form. In the Empire State Building there is much more than American megalomania and coincidence. It does not correspond to the materialistic Rome of Lucretius. It seems to represent, in Henry Adams’s words, “an anonymous aspiration — the visible effort to throw off a visible strain, all our haunting nightmares are expressed as though it were the cry of human suffering.” It is too youthful a symbol to spring from the sidewalks of Megapolis. In short it indicates an unconsidered factor at work in the process of our evolution.

Toynbee believes that new ground may fertilize an old society. Perhaps what actually happens is that primitive conditions block the full flow of knowledge from generation to generation so that the agent of life — ignorance — springs up once more like yeast in the loaf. Ignorance taking the form of innocence and greed and hope threw up the magnificent shaft of the Empire State.

We begin to see how the prophets have been relevant but wrong. Let us hear then Spengler’s prophecy that the Atomic Bomb is an improbable nightmare: —

The more dynamics exhausts its inner possibilities as it nears its goal, the more decidedly the historical

characters in the picture come to the front. . . . The course of this process is marked by the appearance of whole series of daring hypotheses, all of a like sort, which are only apparently demanded by experimental results and which, in fact, world feelings and mythology imagined as long ago as the Gothic Age.

Above all this is manifested in the bizarre hypothesis of atomic disintegration which elucidates the phenomena of radioactivity, and according to which uranium atoms that have kept their essence unaltered in spite of all external influences, for millions of years, quite suddenly without assignable cause explode.

It was at the outset of the Gothic . . . that the myth of the world’s end . . . the twilight of the gods, arose . . . the passionate thrust into distance is Faustian. Force, Will, has aim where there is aim. There is, for the inquiring eye, an end. That which the perspective of oil-painting expressed by means of the vanishing point. . . .

It appears that Spengler underrated the danger. The hypothesis was not bizarre and the world’s end is far closer to us than myth. The great pessimist lived in a fool’s paradise; but how relevant when you consider that the star — the farthest thing that man can look at, the vanishing point of Western man’s passionate thrust into distance — on a field of dark and dirty blue, the color of the sea on an ugly night — western ocean of mystery — the sea the *Mayflower* crossed — became the symbol of the greatest power the world has known. The insignia on the wing of the plane that carried the atom bomb.

Spengler closed the circle of knowledge too soon. Green pastures of terror and ignorance open before us on which intellect still may feed.

5

IT IS true that war and starvation are frequently the means by which a great civilization is dissolved, and even if this were not so it might be hard to consider with equanimity the return of our great-grandchildren to flint and steel. Yet, whatever may await, there is no harm in trying to apply the law of history to our own advantage. We may or may not be able to escape the patterns of our destiny. In any case the first step is to escape the language of despair and self-reproach — the only tongue in which those patterns have been set forth. There is nothing decadent about walking up a hill and sliding down the other side.

Maybe we will never build another Empire State; the innocence that built it is gone. We don’t want one any more. We may not speak of lost arts, only lost desires; and the desires, remember, are those that spring from inadequacy and frustration. So we should speak of lost needs rather than lost desires.

The meek resolve the dilemma of progress by

making no progress. That choice is not open to all of us. The solution that Toynbee suggests, which may be briefly stated as trust in the Christian God, looks alarmingly like the one that Henry Adams threw out half a century earlier as suicide — but there are other possibilities. Die we may. No doubt we will, but for civilizations as well as men it also matters when and how.

Those areas in which we seem to have diverged from the script that has been written for us suggest means whereby we might tinker with history's time machine. Remember that there appeared to be factors at work which the prophets did not assess. Spengler's dismissal of the atomic bomb is the most sinister and most striking indication. Beside this new field for intellectual conquest in the infinitely small, the Empire State Building appears to indicate some renewal of youthful folly. Time perhaps has been expanded for us, both backwards and forwards, and we may make use of this uncertain reprieve from uncertain destiny.

An old society protects itself from inanition by expanding; in radio, in television, in the high-speed press it has new power of expansion. It also gains a few scary moments of growth by "buying" through immigration or subjugation a few new links to feed in at the lower end of the chain of progress. It tries to feed the top back in at the bottom by giving away accumulations of goods in the classic form of bread and circuses. Today in America we have replaced the bread and circuses with model kitchens and larkspur seed; and the arts of mass consumption are doing something to enable our tax exemptions, when they grow up, to make the machine replace the mob. We are not competent to do more than snap at the heels of the problem but the elements of a new technique of survival are here.

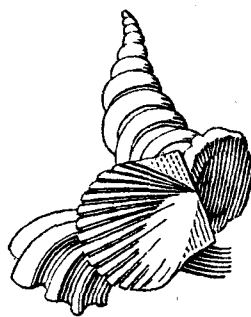
Above all these new techniques stands something

newer yet, the possibility of a strategy of survival which may be derived from the new knowledge of the physiology of events which the scientists of history have brought us and which like evolution is becoming a part of the thought of all men. As in the case of Scrooge a prophecy may modify the very thing it foretells.

However, survival can't be purchased with a nickel and a box top. We have already been given some insight into the kind of price we shall have to pay. In art we must accept simplification in order to gain expanding acceptance (Toynbee calls it vulgarization). "Custom-built" and "mass-produced" are two words that do not go together — we must accept standardization but it is a reaction to and a defense against disintegration; it is not standardization *through* disintegration. Furthermore, we may standardize at new highs. The income tax assists us to preserve the primitive family unit in spite of the "pressure of economic competition which regularly intensifies with social consolidation."

These symptoms of decay are defense mechanisms working in our favor. The processes of consolidation involve the relationships of men. As the techniques of power improve, one man comes to exercise authority directly over many. Thus the units of which society is formed, the pyramids of command, flatten out, become larger and less elastic. The difference is the difference between plate armor and chain mail. In time, if there is time, we might evolve a mathematics of sociology, consciously creating structures best fitted to meet various strains.

It will help also to limit our objective. Why insist on an earthly immortality? We may strive for a preliminary goal of a golden age of a thousand years and thus we may resolve the dilemma of progress short of the maturity of death.





An Atlantic Story



Artist and writer, PATRICK MORGAN teaches art at Phillips Academy, Andover, and at the Fogg Museum at Harvard. His painting time he divides between New England and Canada; he has had a number of one-man shows — the most recent, the exhibition of his paintings at Wellesley College in January and February of this year. His short stories for the Atlantic have a graphic detail and a disarming directness; one of them, "The Heifer," was reprinted in *The Best American Short Stories*, 1949.

THE LILIES

by PATRICK MORGAN

NEIL was fourteen years old when he came to work for me in early May. "Do you know anything of gardening?" I asked him.

"I know vegetables a little, *mais pas les bouquets*."

"The *bouquets* are more difficult. I hope to raise lilies. They are very difficult according to the books."

"Does monsieur garden with books?" Neil looked alarmed. He sensed his job might involve book study, and school had been a hardship. "I can read, of course," he added, and adjusted the shoulder strap of his very new overalls.

"You have overalls that are plenty big, Neil."

"On account that they are new. With washing they will shrink." He was glad I had noticed his investment toward his first pay-job.

Summer brought the summer residents. These migrants were very kindly toward my new interest. Those who had old established gardens hastened to send me plants. Most of these gifts did not happen to further my work with lilies; for my books stated that true lilies were all bulbs and the genus did not include other plants that might commonly be called lilies.

One very old character, a botanist, came with a small package. "Young man," he said, "you have cut out for yourself a lot of trouble if what I hear is true." He told me he had differentiated over twenty kinds of wild roses in these parts. And he told me of many plants both native and foreign that he had cultivated. "Have you ever seen white fireweed?"

"No," I said.

"In Maine it is not so rare, but here I have found it only once. I cultivated it for many years." He described the mountainside, the difficult climb, then the sudden sight of white fireweed, growing on the edge of a *brûlée*. Against the black char of stumps he said it grew with radiance that made him think of Tennyson, and he quoted Tennyson at some length and with radiance, but, unfortunately, I never cared much for Alfred Lord Tennyson.

After we got through with that, he took pains to give me practical advice. To build my garden carefully and dig it deep and well. To plant especially lilies where they would like to grow rather than where I might like to have them seen. If I were really so foolhardy as to try my hand at lilies, to avoid buying bulbs indiscriminately, for sooner or later I would bring in diseased ones. Because of disease, it was better to raise lilies from seed, which in some cases took several years. "But," he said, as old men will, "you are young and can afford to be patient." He handed me the package he held. "Here. I have brought you some healthy bulbs from my garden. Six different species. I have labeled them for you. They will start you out. Good luck, though I think you are a damn fool."

A week later, Neil was carrying out for me what my books and the old botanist had indicated as obligatory. "We must have some sand to mix with the soil," I quoted confidently from borrowed authority which had stated that lilies were finicky about their environment and were apt to take sick unless planted in properly prepared positions. This was due to the fact that they grew from scaly bulbs susceptible to rot in soil that was soggy.

These bulbs sent roots down, and many species supplemented their nourishment by producing another set of roots above the bulb. For all their delicate appearance, they had colossal appetites.

"We have some sand that the mason did not use," said Neil. "Shall I take that?"

"No. It probably has sea salt in it. It is good only for cement. In the brook bed there are deposits of sand that will do. Then fetch from the woods some leaf mold in the wheelbarrow. Meanwhile, I will see if our seedbeds are free of weed roots."

"Okay, monsieur." But as Neil departed, he murmured something about most plants would *toughé sans tout ça*.

I spaded up the earth in the wooden frames. It was rich earth, but heavy and caked. I found several pieces of dandelion root that bled white where the spade cut them, and a quantity of black fibrous roots with little black knobs attached to them. They came from deep down. Neil had not worked the earth deep enough. I told him so when he came back with the sand and showed him the roots.

"Ah, *les pissenlits et les queues-de-renard*," he said, shaking his head as he went off again with the wheelbarrow.

Since the books said the seeds of most species are slow to germinate, it seemed wise to clean the earth thoroughly of all bits of weed root that might grow, spread, and choke the reluctant lily seedlings. As I worked, I too began to wonder how these lilies ever survived in the natural state. Cultivation made us all effete maybe.

After the morning's work, the earth was itself a beautiful thing, as uniform as some substance bought of a chemist. Neil left for his dinner at the church bells' ring. I stayed on to enjoy what we had created. I sifted the earth through my fingers to reassure myself of its purity. The sand had cut the lumpy stickiness of the heavy, richer soil, and the light humus kept moisture in the crumbly mixture that ran evenly between my hands and spread itself through the seed frames. This dirt was clean. How could people garden in gloves?

Toward evening we planted the seeds in careful rows. There were over thirty little packages whose contents, for the most part, seemed identical but whose typed inscriptions gave specific names to each and a vague assurance that some future season might be brightened by tall, short; early, late; umbels and sprays of nodding or upright pink, red, orange, yellow, and white bloom.

"They all look *pas mal pareil*," said Neil with some suspicion.

"The priceless ingredient is the integrity of the maker," I quoted from my soda bicarb container.

Neil stopped work and looked at me. "*Comment?*" he said.

"Let it pass. Imagine, instead, if all these seeds should grow."

"That," said Neil flatly, "is scarcely to be expected." He was a realist-little-given-to-speculation, who took life in whatever way it came. But within his acceptance, he had managed to maintain a style that gave him character. When I first saw him, he was riding cowback toward the village, past our field. I mentioned my memory of this.

"People did find it curious," he said, and explained it was his allotted job to fetch the family cow from pasture each evening. She was a brindled beast of little pedigree with a docile look and a crumpled horn. On his daily chore, Neil had developed the habit of breaking off a willow shoot as he went up the road, and of accustoming the cow to ride him home on her rump as he switched her occasionally on the rear for tempo, occasionally on the side of the neck for direction. The cow apparently accepted everything much as Neil did, but with less style. The cow seemed world-weary. Neil did not.

At the beginning and the end of each row, I had Neil place little stakes on which to impale the seed packages for identification. While he was cutting these to appropriate lengths, and sharpening the ends, I fetched my textbooks, in which I remembered something about disease that attacked seedlings.

The only encouraging sentence in my reading was "Lilies are seldom attacked by insect pests." They were, however, susceptible to contagious diseases. One came from overexposure to continued damp. The patient's foliage became blemished and the plant looked generally peaked. If recognized early and properly medicated, this disease was controllable. For the other disease, a virus infection, science offered no cure. Afflicted plants died a lingering death; slowly but surely their parts contorted into wizened shapes. After a visitation of this virus, the soil was no longer habitable to lilies and must needs be fumigated before starting afresh. Gooseberry bushes and possibly other plants were suspect of acting as Typhoid Marys. I turned to the pages that dealt with infancy. "Damping off," it said, "may give trouble and kill a good many seedlings."

"Oh, well, we will have a Saint Bartholomew's Day," I said, apparently out loud.

"It does not fall this time of year, monsieur. Next week is the *Fête-Dieu*, after which comes the *Saint Jean*. I have marked all the rows for now, with their proper packages."

"Then water the beds. And tomorrow morning ask at the general store for a box of Semesan or we may have Saint Bartholomew's Day early this year."

2

THE seedlings, some of them, grew into plants; a few flowered. As they flowered, I was able to identify them again, for the paper packages carry-

ing their names had disintegrated the first winter. By degrees, Neil transplanted them to permanent quarters. We now had some twenty species that showed a willingness to live in the land. Most of these had orange flowers in spite of what the catalogues said to the contrary. One species in particular was a discredit to its heralds. This was the amiable lily, *Lilium amabile*, described in all books as grenadine red. It turned out to be closer to tangerine juice than to grenadine in color, and in spite of its disarming name it was an aggressive, heavy orange, not merely a bright orange. It grew handsomely, however.

"Neil," I said, "everything turns out orange in our gardening."

"Only those flowers God made that way, monsieur. Did not a few last year flower big and white? And there were some small pink ones *à travers* the others. Besides, there are still several rows too little yet to flower. Perhaps another season they may produce more to monsieur's taste."

"I hope so. Meanwhile, we have enough to begin on."

"To begin what?"

"To begin hybridizing. We can cross two species."

"How does monsieur expect to do that?"

"By taking the pollen on these things from this flower and putting it like this on the central part of this flower." My demonstration seemed to me miraculous, as if I had spent my life mismarrying lilies. Luckily, as the books had said, "the parts are large and easily recognized." Neil looked unimpressed.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"No. One must keep taking all the pollen parts off the spray of the female as the blossoms open, to ensure cross-fertilization."

"How does one know that flower is female?"

"It is both male and female. That is why you have to keep the pollen parts removed."

"*Je ne comprends pas.*"

To my surprise, I found my next step in raising lilies was to give a basic talk to this French Canadian boy on the facts of flower life. That evening, he checked with *monsieur le curé* to make sure I had given him straight facts. Only then did he believe that flowers, too, had sex.

One day, I returned from a walk to find I had callers whom Neil was showing around the garden. As I approached, the lady all in white tottered toward me on very high heels. She had an expensive French look. Her husband looked French too. He was a head shorter than she but held himself very straight to give his inchage its utmost. He bounced toward me on springy step and was quick to explain his visit. A most important petition to the local government, on some vital cause or other, needed signers. We sat down on the lawn chairs while he gave me the works. His manner of speech

bristled like his little mustache as he explained and expounded the importance of his mission, with side references to his own importance. I paid more attention to his fantastic Gallic mannerisms than to his theme, which bubbled out in dramatic flow from some deep spring of conviction. His wife relaxed, accepted a cigarette.

Having run the gamut of his speech without pause for paragraphing, this rapacious little man continued, "And you are interested in plants. Here in Canada our climate does not favor them much. They flower late and are soon killed by early frost. Is that not it?"

Finally called on to participate, I said he was correct in regard to annuals. I was interested in perennials, especially lilies, some of which did bloom early.

"Do you hear, Roseanne? He interests himself in lilies, some of which bloom early. Do we have lilies in our garden?"

"*J'adore les lis,*" Roseanne said, undulating slightly in her chair, "but we have not any in our garden."

"They are beautiful," I said, "but hard to grow."

"That is it," said the little man. "Roseanne, they are difficult. Because of our climate."

"No. Anywhere they are difficult," I said.

"Then they are capricious," said the little man; "like women." He gave me a wink, his mustache bristled, and he shot a look toward his wife, who happened to be preoccupied in appraisal of her nail polish. "Beautiful and capricious," he said, looking toward heaven this time.

"I hope to strengthen them, however, by hybridizing."

"The lilies — or women?" With this, he was self-delighted. His wife managed to speak. "Raoul is always *spirituel* like that," she said.

"No. But tell me, now that we have made our little jokes," he said, "what you intend to do with this hybridizing."

"To get more vigorous plants and flowers of finer color. But it will take time." I explained roughly the process of hybridizing, which seemed to interest the little man a lot.

"So," he said, "like a true American you hope for bigger and better lilies with this hybridization."

"If I am lucky. One must work with them for many years."

"Of course," said the little man, with a studied look, "until they get the habit."

3

THE next spring brought surprises. Several rows of retarded seedling lilies raised flower stalks. The winter casualties were light. In mid-June the first buds of the Caucasian lily opened. The great straw-yellow blossoms of waxy sheen hung in graceful elegance, but smelled as strongly scented as a slut.

Then came the delicate lacquer-red sprays of tiny coral lilies in great profusion. But strongest, most variable, and of least refinement were the large heads of chalice-flowered lilies whose color ranged equivocally from yellow through orange toward red.

"Monsieur will not find these rows much to his taste," Neil predicted.

"Can't say as I do, though they grow the best of any. They ought to make a tough parent to some hybrid. But they vary so much I can't tell them by name."

"In your books, maybe —" Neil was changing his opinion slowly about knowledge stored in books.

"I am not *assez botaniste* to tell even from the books. There are several sorts that resemble each other closely."

"Some of these," said Neil, "have woolly buds, some smooth." He was beginning to get the hang of botany. "But the color does not vary in accordance with this."

"I think the best thing is to work for color and cross the yellowish ones together; also, the reddest ones together. I shall cut the orange ones for the house so they will not participate."

"Monsieur has little taste for orange."

As I cut the flowers, I thought about this. Orange was not a fashionable color, yet I hoped I was not simply a victim of current trends in good taste and unwittingly subscribing to fad. Possibly orange lacked or possessed some character that all other colors opposed. If so, this would be an easy justification of a prejudice; to put the blame on the color. But to segregate one color as inferior, and prove it, would be difficult at best. Another angle might be that orange seemed the commonest color in lilies, therefore of less worth. But again I hoped my values were not those of the collector, who bases his on scarcity above beauty. I thought I was free of this charge because I liked one species frankly orange, bright and gay. But these flowers that I was cutting were equivocally orange; they lacked authority in their blends, and hovered between the forthright extremes of yellow and of red. Nor were they uniform. Though strong, their color implied some weakness. So, to restore to them their ancestral strength and recast their character was my ambition. My preference of color seemed based on the establishment of a crisper order.

During the summer months, Neil became enthusiastic. He crossed several species on his own. The books had said to cover the hybridized flower with a paper bag against repollination by vagrant bees. But Neil maintained that on windy days such added bulk might break the slender stalks. He preferred to depollinate the unused flowers and, every morning as new blossoms opened, remove the anthers still unripe. One afternoon he came to me with a troubled look.

"I have done a bad thing, monsieur," he said.

"Nothing serious, I hope." I saw he was upset.

"It is this," said Neil. "Today I forgot to geld the lilies."

That fall, he harvested the seed. Not many pods developed, yet he was proud. In his enthusiasm, he had used some species that do not set seed readily. The coarse chalice-flowered lilies yielded best. Neil mixed the seedbed soil and planted his small harvest with a certain tenderness.

4

AFTER a mild winter with little snow, spring came early. But the spring rains were excessive. They continued beyond their worth and heralded in a cold spell that held growth in abeyance. Neil said it was because the moon was a month late; now in May we had the April moon. Certainly the earth looked as though heaven's clocks were running slow. The cure was patience according to what Neil had heard.

But patience did not save the early-flowering lilies. Their buds drooped, their foliage blotched. Disease had hit the garden. We applied medication as the books prescribed, not knowing if this were the fatal pest or the blight brought on by excess dampness.

"I wish your moon would get a move on, Neil."

"It will catch up only in August. There are two moons that month."

"Do you get this stuff from books?"

"From my grandfather."

Unable to refute such authority, I changed the subject. "These plants look better. I don't believe we will have to fumigate the earth and start anew."

"*Tant mieux*," said Neil, the peasant.

Though June was nearly flowerless, the later lilies bloomed profusely. The summer sun routed the last traces of the blight.

In July came the ladies. The social season had brought American guests to Roseanne, who called up. Charming people. So interested in gardens. Might she bring them over?

They came one hot July afternoon. Roseanne's ladies wore assorted print dresses, eminent hats, and practical-looking shoes. Two of them said they were members of a New Jersey garden club, the third said she came from Westchester. Their conversational attack was reckless.

Roseanne, hatless and with restyled hair, was again dressed in white. She complained of the heat, drew a chair to the shady side of the lawn, and fed me to her guests.

I led them through the garden. Their attention pounced from this to that as they interrupted each other, spreading their enthusiasm thinly. Their three thoraxes chirped along in one incessancy.

I showed them Farrer's lily, the marbled martagon, whose delicate small Turk's-cap flower is marbled with purple. It elicited a chirp about some elfin sculptor. I pointed out the Turk's-cap of

Byzantium, whose first glossy wine-dark blossoms were just opened. She from Westchester began to take notes on a tiny pad.

Hybrids? Was I hybridizing? Why did they not know about this? How? When? Where? Which? Who and whom? The absurdity of their three thoraxes, the leveling of all values, the staggering tempo of their onslaught, led me to address them as from a platform, in the hope that garden club lectures had disciplined them to moderate quiet.

This, I said, is *Lilium candidum*, the Madonna lily, that breeds only in the wild strain. Then it grows with dark stalks, in Salonika. Once, a hundred years ago, it had a bastard, the nankeen lily, that came to people's attention in Germany. There is reason to believe it was sired by the scarlet Turk's-cap of Greece.

These, the tiger lilies, set no seed, but contrive to reproduce by self-developed bulbils. See, these black and shiny balls already set at the leaf joints will roll to earth when ripe and colonize this space.

Those are Henry's lily, so sensitive, it is said, that they will fertilize if stimulated by a brush or dust or any lily pollen, yet always reproduce their kind.

Those rows of plants with leaves in whorls have Turk's-cap flowers in a wide range of color; they breed together freely. But here are prudes with no response. They will not bear.

I paused, a little out of breath. New Jersey murmured it was time to go, and reluctant Westchester folded her scribbled notes.

Scarcely had they departed when Neil, carrying a limp glove, confronted me. "Your *visite* has dropped this in the garden."

"I wonder to which one it belongs," I said.

"To the one who still has its mate, probably," he replied, with Gallic logic. "Did they find the lilies of consequence?"

"Yes," I said. "They were interested since they were members of a garden club."

"Some day, maybe, I shall read books on gardens and join such a club. But it will all cost more money than I can afford, no doubt."

"Neil, are you asking me to raise your wages?"

"I would not refuse such an offer. This botany is a hazardous profession compared to farming but opens wide opportunity, it seems. Does Madame Roseanne by chance also belong to a botany book club, monsieur?"



RED VICTORY

by GEORGIE STARBUCK GALBRAITH

If, as some say, the insects are the race
 Who one day shall inherit this earthly place,
 I dearly hope the dominating force
 Will be the flies . . . not common house- or horse-,
 But dragon-, fire-, and butter-. I could forgive,
 Or nearly, an earth where people didn't live,
 If sunlight swarmed with the scintillating whir
 Of a million dragons pinioned on gossamer;
 If the meadow wore a vibrant velvet dress
 Of fabulous butterflies; were night no less
 Enchanted by pyrotechnic fantasies
 Of myriad fireflies. But I fear that these
 Are not the winged legions who would rule.
 They are too useless and too beautiful.
 No, it would be the ants, red disciplined cattle,
 The proletariat having won its battle.



SIDNEY C. HAYWARD is Secretary of Dartmouth College and in his vacations a dry-fly fisherman of boundless ambition. For years he and his friend Paul Sample, the artist, had looked forward to the prospect of fishing the salmon rivers of Newfoundland. Last summer they made the trip by plane and cabin cruiser, and while the seafaring was often rough and the insects plentiful, so were the grilse, the sea trout, and the fresh-run salmon.

THE SALMON OF NEWFOUNDLAND

by SIDNEY C. HAYWARD

1

NEWFOUNDLAND is a vast area of water and wilderness to the north, inviting and off the beaten track. Over a period of years I had wondered how we could travel there quickly, how much it would cost, what facilities for camping, or bed and board, might be available, what the fishing would be like.

Fly-fishing is always a gamble, especially for salmon. Chances are best when the beautiful silver fish move from the sea into the fresh water of rivers on the late spring run. From mid-June to mid-July is generally the height of the run, a period of high water when salmon aren't so fussy about the size of flies and leaders as they become later. Our dates of late July and early August were late but we looked forward to working harder for our fish and to using dry flies.

Paul Sample, artist at Dartmouth College, and I left Boston Sunday morning, July 23, via the excellent Trans-Canada Airlines on a restful, rapid flight along the coast of Maine, crossing New Brunswick's great wooded central plain, winging over Prince Edward Island and Cabot Strait to Newfoundland's huge transatlantic base at Gander — more than 1000 air miles from breakfast at the Parker House. Dr. Erwin C. Miller and Robert W. Stoddard of Worcester arrived by air in the evening to complete our fishing party to the barren and still partly frozen north.

The next morning a rugged Norseman seaplane, chartered from Newfoundland Airways, took us and a pile of gear to the northwest coast village of Port Saunders. Now the scene below was one of chrome green coniferous forests and chains of lakes in deep ultramarine, the whole spotted with irregular dark patches scattered aimlessly across the vast canvas by cumulus between sun and earth.

At Port Saunders the seaplane taxied alongside our chartered boat, skippered by Alex H. Parsons of Bonne Bay, Newfoundland. The 50-foot craft

accommodates four fishermen. As Sandy Parsons says, "My cruiser is equipped to take four sportsmen. There can be four men in a party, or two men and two women, or all women, but I will not have three men and one woman in a party — that is out." We who were good friends to begin with became very close to each other in that 10 x 10 cabin where fishing equipment mixed freely with groceries, wet boots, and red flannels.

Our skipper has the only boat along hundreds of miles of coast. We had budgeted the two weeks' trip at about \$500 apiece, of which half went for air travel and half for the boat, crew, chow, and guides. Costs were about as expected. There's no danger of doing any extensive shopping up in that desolate country.

Once aboard we could go anywhere, violent and unpredictable weather permitting. At least we could fish any river that we could reach, since Newfoundland streams are all "open," in contrast to the limited salmon fishing available to the public in most other sections of eastern Canada. The newest province in the Dominion offers vast opportunities to American sportsmen. Retention of fishing rights for the local and visiting anglers requires strict warden control to prevent poaching, netting, jigging, and other crimes against the salmon. My license was checked by more wardens than I have ever seen in New Hampshire.

After lunch in our small cabin Captain Parsons churned his boat 10 miles up Hawkes Bay for the first chance to wet a line, in the East River. Standard procedure is to anchor off the river mouth and use the boat's dory to the beach. A handsome falls pool is almost within sight of tidewater on the East River. Rods were rigged — all distinctly on the light side, about 7 ounces — for an evening's fishing in the long stretch where small salmon (grilse) were jumping.

These vigorous and handsome young salmon are

a joy to handle on light gear. They are especially active around a dry fly, often boiling fully out of water to hit the floating wisp of feathers, arching down upon the fly in a cascade of spray to pull a long length of line from the singing reel before leaping again and again to stand on their tails and engage in all manner of pyrotechnics. On a light rod they often provide more sport than their full-grown brothers. Grilse, or "peals" as they are called in Labrador, start their run several weeks later than salmon; so in midsummer and near the sea, we caught many, a dozen or more, in some pools. Most of these beautiful fish we released, keeping only what were needed for Eli Ellsworth, the cheerful Newfoundlander who doubled as cook and sailor. The grilse in those icy waters weighed 4 to 5 pounds.

It is claimed by the natives around Port Saunders that salmon lose their teeth when they enter fresh water. The local folks say that Nature provides for losing one tooth per day: one the first day, another the second, and so on, with no apparent pain or loss of jet speed to the fish. The salmon that we caught near the ocean, some with sea lice on their sides, had a lot of teeth. We found others whose dental equipment was not complete. I would say that all of our fish had more teeth than the natives.

2

I AM reminded by my notes that Tuesday, July 25, was a great day on the Torrent River, well named from its precipitous descent into Hawkes Bay. The trek above the Torrent's falls was a long one but worth every slipping, stumbling step through thick spruce forests and along boulder-strewn, buggy beaches. It might be recorded here that our whole journey was no Sunday-school picnic. Hiking on side trips up many miles of rough rivers, and being constantly on the move by sea and land, is arduous sport.

In common with other roaming anglers, we had caught many Canadian trout but up to this day had never seen squaretails of such size come to a fly in such numbers. I used a 9-foot leader tapered down to OX with a home-tied No. 10 bivisible to cast into a long, smooth slick — the outlet of one large pool into another. This particular run brought such a whirlwind of action that a cast would bring up not one but several handsome trout fighting for the fly. These 2-pound brook trout were of an orange and red hue, with bright speckles. It was an incredible experience.

My journal for July 26 reports: "We left Port Saunders at 4.30 A.M. and made a rough run 27 miles to River Castor settlement and a smooth enclosed anchorage. Then by John Plowman's open fishing boat to the mouth of Castors River, landing in a half-dozen dooryards to walk through groups of sled dogs, cows, calves, and chickens to the First

Pond, crossing by dory to beautiful Salmon Pool. With plenty of water for all four rods, this must be ranked among the fine pools of the continent. Water temperature 54°, air 56°, too cold for dries, but small salmon and grilse took well in midday on No. 8 and 10 wets with silver bodies such as Silver Grey, a favorite fly on this river. We encountered cold northeast wind and heavy rain. Filet of grilse was grilled over a fire sputtering in the storm. Total score, 16 fish — all released except a few for eating. Back to the boat at 10 for a late supper after evening fishing."

Now this particular mess of fish, and many another on the journey, would have looked very good in the freezer at home. There was not only no chance of taking any of the catch home, there was nothing to do with them up there. We handled the fish carefully and let them go.

The weather at Castors was typical of the northwest coast. Early morning calm, and even weak sunshine setting off the rocky highlands, was deceptive. Underwear of the snug and long variety became a comforting foundation for dungarees, woolen shirts, sweaters, short raincoat, and boots or waders. Bob Stoddard gave a pair of the new plastic waders an exacting test by wearing this handy outfit throughout the trip, including strenuous marches through thick brush. The material stood up well, a few punctures being quickly repaired.

Thursday, July 27, was not the only day when we left a safe anchorage to venture into the stormy, windy Gulf of St. Lawrence to be turned back by heavy seas and gales. Seeking to make the open-water run to Flower's Cove, we could not round tempestuous Freolle Point soon after dawn, and Sandy Parsons decided we might try "this evening" — meaning 5 to 6 P.M. Later in the day, when conditions were not so bad, we made the eastern passage to Flower's Cove Light, arriving at dusk. At this point we were only 11 miles from Labrador, 1200 miles from home.

Flower's Cove is a good sample of the coastal "outports." Its sheltering peninsula, 200 yards wide, juts out into the sea. Paths run down the center of this strip leading off to each of the dwellings; fish shacks and wharves cluster on the cove side; codfish and lobsters provide a livelihood in the storm-swept, gale-blown, treeless, fogbound village. The general appearance of these northern settlements is reminiscent of Monhegan, Maine's well-loved island.

The aroma of salt cod in the fish sheds, mixed with the tang of damp salt air, of seaweed on the rocks at low tide, and of tarred ropes, strongly pervades the harbor; while the rhythmic swish of oars and their regular beat against the dory's wooden pins, waves lapping the piling of a wharf, the staccato putt-putt of single-cylinder boat engines, voices calling in the rapid high inflections

of northern Newfoundland talk, and a distant deep-voiced foghorn are sounds of the coast.

Primed with dramamine against the turbulent crossing of the Strait of Belleisle, we set sail early the next morning from Flower's Cove and made Point Amour Light, the Labrador, in an hour. This was good fortune as the weather can and does keep small boats bound to the coast for a week at a time. Sighting an iceberg, the Skipper altered his bearings to circle the huge floating menace. It was here that Captain Parsons earnestly gave me advice, as he circled closer for the benefit of clicking cameras: "I never trusts an hieberg, the sons of bitches." Drawing nearer in our tiny craft to the plunging emeraude water-line of the mass of polar ice, Sandy emphasized his opinion: "Don't you never trusts an hieberg, Mr. Haddams." (The "Mr. Haddams" was derived from an earlier fishing party of Frederick Adams of Boston, and under strained circumstances Sandy would thus address me.)

On another occasion, as we were rolling and tossing down a particularly rocky and forbidding section of the coast, the Skipper said, "Mr. Haddams, will you takes the wheel, please."

"Where are we going?" I inquired.

"Just keeps her off the rocks, my son," said Sandy while he puttered for an hour with a motor.

3

THE summer days are long in northern latitudes. More than once we hit the deck at 5 to start cruising or fishing, and had enough daylight to fish until 10 in the evening. After inspecting the iceberg at close quarters we moved into Pinware Bay, anchoring off the mouth of that young giant of a stream, the Pinware River, seldom fished even in the lower stretches. We embarked up-river in two small boats, seeking pools unknown to the local folks and certainly to us. Each angler selected likely-looking pockets in the broad Pinware. The salmon were not fussy, as is evidenced by Paul Sample's taking two on a Dusty Miller 10 while Bob Stoddard's double Silver Grey 4 and my single No. 4 were both acceptable.

Northern Newfoundland and Labrador streams present no low-water problems. They were running bank high in early August when the nightly nip in the air boded the next major event to be a freeze. The Pinware River tested 52° and the air temperature was 56°. Spring-fed rivulets trickled into the river from ledges and rocky slopes leading to the 2000-foot barrens above. These little brooks tested as low as 40° and their effect could be measured 100 yards or more below the point where they joined the river, owing to the affinity that colder water has for the shore.

On Saturday we pushed farther up the river, with Stoddard and myself determined to reach

the distant forks of the wild stream. We thought the obstacles of ledges, boulders, cliffs, and brush could be surmounted, so we made an early start. Not until 6 in the evening did we reach a handsome run of water at the forks. Then we had only time enough to establish the existence of rising salmon in those dream pools which have not been fished for many years. Pouring rain and hordes of black flies, accompanied by early darkness borne by a northeast wind full of fog, forced our departure for the return trip. There was not an easy or sure step made in the wet blackness as we struggled through unending and unbelievably thick spruce, mounted the high barrens to circle a cliff, then slipped along the treacherous rocks of the river. Exhausted, we were welcomed by the others on the boat with relief at 1 A.M.

Southern Labrador is infested with black flies. It may be because of the prevailing winds or the especially destitute nature of the country. There are also numerous, but bearable, insects in Newfoundland. When planning our trip we asked advice from the Dartmouth Museum's archaeologist, Elmer Harp, who camped and excavated for artifacts on this coast a year earlier. "What kind of fly dope would be best?" we asked. "Not any," he replied. This was a slight exaggeration but his advice to take head nets, canvas gloves, and long underwear was right. They are the only answer on jaunts into the interior buggy bush.

On Sunday, July 30, Sandy moved his boat west on the Labrador coast to Forteau Bay, anchoring at the mouth of the Forteau River, or Buckles Brook. After the usual lunch of soup, toast, and black tea all hands struck off by dory for the fishing on the Forteau. We were heartened to learn the sea trout were running. Squaretails returning from a healthful sojourn in the sea were caught almost at will and weighed up to 5 pounds.

It rained again that day. When questioned about the Labrador weather a native commented: "Sometimes we sees the sun three or four times in the summer." He appeared to be serious.

The Forteau was well worth another day, and Monday was devoted to further fishing of the lower pools holding sea trout and grilse. Reports were highly favorable on the headwaters — large pools filled with salmon, never fished by anyone, falls the salmon could not leap, "not a bad trip at all, only 6 miles," and so forth. By now we knew a Labrador mile when we heard it mentioned.

Dr. Miller admired the medical work done by the Grenfell Association at its Flower's Cove and Forteau Missions, where we saw hospital facilities and visited with the British nurses in charge.

Late in the day we hauled anchor to a better mooring against the return crossing to Newfoundland. At the tiny settlement of West St. Modeste, Labrador, its houses clinging to a seaside cliff, we witnessed an unforgettable scene. A funeral was

in progress. The deceased was an Orangeman, and his men friends for miles up and down the coast had traveled in a flotilla of fishing boats that crowded the little harbor to pay their last respects. The procession formed at the wharf, somber men in Sunday best, all with rubber boots on, all wearing a bright orange sash, the straggling group led by orange flags. Every Protestant within many miles was there. The Orangemen marched up the cliff to a rocky cemetery, their loyal band disappearing through a great cleft in the huge rocks, and being swallowed by a swirling fog blown on a northerly wind from the tundra barrens beyond. The scene was sketched by Paul Sample, along with scores of other incidents, vistas, and people to fill three sketchbooks from which the artist has since worked out a number of striking water colors and oils.

4

THE Fisherman Not Only Fishes." He also travels. We did on Tuesday, August 1, on the favorable combination of ebb tide and west wind. We recrossed the Strait of Belleisle to seek gas and finally located two 43-gallon drums of Esso at Black Duck Cove. There was still a day's run ahead through heavy seas against a quartering strong west wind 60 miles south to Port Saunders. We were better sailors than we thought, but dramamine was a precaution and one effect of this drug is drowsiness. Artist Sample forsook all interest in art and fishing. He slept seven hours during the day. I personally observed him clutching the side of his bunk with both hands to avoid being thrown on the deck. Dramamine really works. At least we credited this new drug with keeping us well on several long and rough sea trips.

The journal for the next day records: "Rough run 10 miles to River of Ponds, leaving Port Saunders at 8 with Sandy doubtful about making it, Eli the cook confident, the rest of us hopeful." This proved to be our best fishing river. All of the party took salmon and several ran up to 12 or 14 pounds. Earlier in the season bigger salmon are taken. We heard from the wardens about catches of 25- and even 30-pound fish. But those would be heavy for northern rivers and our 14-pounders (which we not only guessed at but weighed) were highly satisfactory on light dry-fly gear.

The River of Ponds offers a succession of splendid pools from the sea to the first lake. It was here that we named the Paul Sample Dry, a fly perfected by the artist and one that produced in fine fashion on several occasions. I decided that such a lethal lure must have a name after it bobbed merrily down a fast-running rip and a fine 14-pound salmon arched completely out of water to become firmly hooked and landed forty-five minutes later. I had tied this particular fly in the

company of David McCord of Harvard earlier in the summer. The Paul Sample Dry includes a hair wing, generous hackle, and bit of cork around the hook.

Bob Stoddard and I were keen to see the more distant pools. This meant a journey of two days without much time to fish en route, but the exploring urge was strong and off we went with rods, head nets, and a pack basket which we later discovered contained a loaf of bread and a few cans of this and that, but nothing resembling cooking utensils, salt pork, or other supplies ordinarily considered essential for a camping trip. The local guides strictly observe Admiral King's wartime injunction: "Do the Best You Can with What You Have." If you don't have anything to begin with, there is that much less to do about it. However, an old bedspring made a good grill for filet of trout, and the abandoned camp, bare of furnishings, put a roof over our heads.

At this point, the forks of the river, we were about 12 miles from the sea and there are excellent stretches of salmon water, especially for the dry fly, in the upper River of Ponds, as in the lower sections. It was a shame not to spend a week up there, instead of a few hours, fishing such handsome water as the Rock, Barras', Island, Home, Infants, Falls, and Canyon Pools. Bob found especially good fishing in Barras' Pool, where a Cosseboom brought him several salmon.

For almost the first time in nearly ten days, as our journey approached its end, we saw the sun. Quantities of blue iris covered the beaches of the river, sheep laurel was blossoming on higher ground, and we found a profusion of teaberries, clintonia, bunchberries, and meadow rue along the trails. There were occasional patches of a little white orchid and we ran into a large group of pitcher plants, some with the rare blossoms. It was here that Eli industriously gathered a basket of fresh fruit in the form of "bakeapple." These berries grow on the high barrens and are prized in a land where anything fresh, except fish, is cordially welcomed.

The following day we had time to make a few final casts in northern waters before our noon departure on a tide high enough to catapult our craft out of its anchorage into the whitecapped sea. After an eight-hour run up the coast to the beautiful fjord of Bonne Bay, we took a bus to the railroad, and then our airplane journey home.

Conditions are never "just right," not even in unfished rivers teeming with fresh-run salmon. But we had learned before now, as all sportsmen do learn, that it is not the quantity of fish that's fun, it's the fishing. We had caught and released a barrel of trout and salmon on this trip. That didn't matter. The deep, dark pools where huge fins rolled above the surface, and where our best efforts failed, will lure us back another day.



As no other medium could, television showed the American public many harsh truths about organized crime and its connections with government. The lesson went home to millions of Americans. But as THURMAN ARNOLD is quick to perceive, such a spectacle in the future could completely invalidate the due process of law. Mr. Arnold was Professor of Law at Yale from 1931 to 1938; he was Assistant Attorney General of the United States from 1938 to 1943, and he is now practicing law in Washington.

MOB JUSTICE AND TELEVISION

by THURMAN ARNOLD

1

THE production put on by the Kefauver Committee on crime is unquestionably the best show of the year. My introduction to it was during the examination of Mr. Costello. I missed an entire morning at the office, fascinated and at the same time appalled by the dramatic quality of this new form of public inquisition.

Mr. Costello was not visible. Instead the camera focused on his hands, which constantly moved and twitched in a decidedly guilty way. It was apparent that the committee did not regard Mr. Costello as a pillar of the church or as otherwise an object of hero worship. They were at the moment going back to his career during prohibition. Counsel for the committee would read selected answers made by Costello at a previous examination and ask him if he didn't remember so answering. It was an effective dramatic device, particularly when the camera would switch from the stern and righteous faces of the committee and its counsel to the guilty twitching hands of the gambler. It soon appeared that Costello had started as a bootlegger. It became equally apparent that the questions were not for the purpose of finding out anything. The committee already had the information. And so Mr. Costello's attorney thought he had a point. He objected on the ground that all the committee was doing was castigating his client in public for misdeeds in the dim and distant past. He implied that an investigation into the violations of the prohibition laws had become somewhat dated since the repeal of that great experiment. But the presiding Senator had the answer. He observed that if Mr. Costello had been engaged in a conspiracy to violate the prohibition laws at the time of his naturalization it might be a present ground for revoking his citizenship as fraudulently obtained. Counsel agreed, and Mr. Costello's hands twitched violently. The possibility was considered sufficient to establish the

relevancy of going back twenty years. The camera then switched to Mr. Costello's attorney, whose face registered complete frustration as effectively as I have ever seen it done by any professional actor. In fact, the entire cast was good. Everybody was having fun except Mr. Costello, and certainly no one would suggest that gamblers deserve to be comfortable in a land where gambling is quite often and under certain circumstances illegal.

Nor, as is apparent from a later incident, are persons who associate with unsavory characters entitled to consideration. Mr. Crane testified that he gave Mayor O'Dwyer \$10,000 in cash on a front porch in the dark. Ambassador O'Dwyer, frantically flying up from Mexico, denied it. The publicly announced verdict of the committee was that one of the two had perjured himself. This verdict of guilt in the alternative against a public figure is a new weapon in the arsenal of law enforcement for which I predict a bright future. It gets two birds with one shot, and at the same time is so simple to operate that even a child can handle it without danger to himself.

Captious critics might, of course, argue that Mayor O'Dwyer's official conduct in New York and Governor Dewey's alleged indifference to Saratoga gambling were, under our federal system, none of the business of Congress. But if so New York has an easy answer. If Senators investigate state officials over television, then let state legislators use the same medium to investigate the Senators whenever they catch them in their state. Governor Dewey requested the committee to come to Albany and learn about crime from him. They declined. Immediately thereafter they should have been hauled to Albany under subpoena for a compulsory course in the problem of crime. It makes a better game if the opposing side occasionally gets the ball.

Bishop Cannon must be turning in his grave with

disappointment because he lived before criminal inquisition by television. He had to contend with the grand jury system, a relic of the days when it was thought that investigations of crime had to be conducted in secret. The notion was that even suspicious and unsavory characters should not be publicly accused by a responsible tribunal unless there was enough evidence to support an indictment. And so the bootleggers who supplied liquor to respectable but wayward citizens escaped. If Senators who followed the inspiration of the good Bishop could have compelled the convivial elements of our various cities either to tell over television the names of their bootleggers or to decline on the ground of self-incrimination, they would have cleaned up every country club in the land.

Today the utility of this device in getting rid of subversive ideas on the screen, in the theater, on college campuses, is as yet unexplored. Anyone who has been on television knows the camera fright involved in a first appearance. College professors are shy and retiring folk. When their opinions are inquired into before 20 million listeners by an investigator experienced and skilled in television showmanship, millions of American housewives are going to enjoy the entrancing spectacle of seeing them go to pieces before their eyes with twitching hands, nervous voices, hesitating answers, and similar evidences of guilt which made the ancient trial by ordeal the effective instrument that it was.

Unfortunately Senator McCarthy has not yet attained the chairmanship of an investigating committee. He can now go on television himself but he can't examine unwilling witnesses there. This is like trying to conduct a fox hunt without a live fox. But the process of time and seniority will soon remove that handicap, and when the Senator does put on his show I'll lay a substantial wager with my bookie (provided the Kefauver Committee has not deported him) that McCarthy will make the efforts of the present committee look like the work of inept amateurs.

Trials in our courts of justice are public but the audience is so limited that the ordinary housewife can't see the show because, as we go to press, cameras are still banned. I suggest that if this rule can't be changed, all the judge has to do is to hold a trial like that of Alger Hiss in the Yankee Stadium. By this method, while the judge could not get television rights he would still have quite a crowd in any *cause célèbre*. And since judges do not have to run for office as often as Senators, this minor disadvantage creates no real injustice.

The beauty of criminal investigation by television is that it permits us to preserve intact our traditional principle against self-incrimination and at the same time prevents that privilege from getting in our way. No respectable public figure would dare invoke it over a coaxial cable, so that it is a rare case in which a verdict of guilty in the alternative between the

accuser and the accused cannot be obtained against any prominent individual.

These are the outstanding virtues of this new technique for public hearings. Others might be added. This kind of presentation makes the problems of government simple enough to be understood by readers of comic strips. It eliminates the bores who are unable to discuss a public issue as a matter of black and white. When ex-Mayor O'Dwyer was testifying about the problem of crime from his vast experience as a prosecutor and a mayor, I am informed the stations were flooded with calls to get him off and put Virginia Hill back on. In my view these people had a point. How can anyone enjoy a good detective story when his train of thought is constantly interrupted by tiresome undramatic interpolation?

Yet in spite of these many and obvious advantages, I am prepared to argue that the entire show should be taken off the road and that hereafter no investigator should ever be permitted to use the long arm of a government subpoena to force any witness, however unsavory, to confess (or discuss) his sins before 20 million people. And I would maintain this view even if I were convinced that it meant the continuance of the horrid gambling at Saratoga that has shocked the conscience of the civilized world. And if the great television audience protested I would have Arthur Godfrey appear and read to them what Moses said to the children of Israel when they began the worship of the golden calf: "Ye have sinned a great sin." Exodus 32, 30. I would have him explain that justice is even more important than the enforcement of sumptuary laws.

2

THE thing which I believe is overlooked by those who argue that television is a legitimate extension of our traditional public hearing is this. The reason that a criminal trial is public is not to obtain the maximum publicity for judges or prosecutors. It was not intended to make a *cause célèbre* out of criminal prosecutions. It is public for the protection of the accused against star-chamber methods, and for the protection of the public against secret deals and alliances. The notion that since a criminal trial is usually entertaining it should be so staged as to provide the greatest entertainment to the greatest number is not an American tradition. A criminal hearing should not be a star chamber. It is equally important that it should not be a circus.

I recognize that a legislative investigation of crime, such as the Kefauver Committee, is not strictly speaking a criminal proceeding. But anyone viewing the proceedings in New York will understand how easily it can be turned into one and how great the temptation is to do so. If the committee succeeds in arousing the American housewife, it is inevitable that there will be a counterreaction and

the American housewife will arouse the committee. If this mutual excitement becomes a common incident to the legislative hearing, blind forces will be unleashed which I do not like to contemplate. When a Congressional hearing becomes through the osmosis of television more of a trial than an attempt to obtain information for legislative action, the punishment may be as severe as fine or imprisonment. For the screen actor it may be the loss of his career. For a college professor it may be the end of his job. The fact that these incidents can happen in a hearing even without television does not in my view justify magnifying them a thousand times in order to entertain housewives.

But apart from the injustice to witnesses, there is the effect on the legislative committee itself. It tends to degrade the subject matter of the hearings. The crucial nonmilitary problems before us concern inflation and the economics of mobilization. But these are dull subjects. Their Hooper rating would be nil. The sure-fire topics are sin, sex, and subversion, not presented abstractly but pepped up with live witnesses. Sex presents its difficulties under our present mores. But properly buttered up as an educational show there is no reason why an investigation of vice in our high schools would not be accepted. After all, are we trying to protect the American home or aren't we?

My trouble here is not a moral one. It is only that the really important investigations cannot compete with these circuses. As a result, at a time of national peril we see the time of our most important Senators engaged in arousing the public on dangers which the historian is going to regard as of the utmost triviality. Indeed, if a sensible list of priorities for the expenditure of Congressional effort and for the education of the public were made today and then turned upside down with the least important thing put first, we would have the present situation. For this distortion of government objectives, investigation by television will bear an increasing responsibility.

And then there is the degrading effect of an audience of 20 million on the manner in which the material is presented. It may be that fox hunts began as an honest attempt to exterminate these predatory animals. I do not think they are that today — at least not the hunts I have seen. And I had an uneasy suspicion, as I watched the Senate crime hearing, that the same metamorphosis was taking

place there. I could be wrong, but it did not seem to me that putting an unwilling witness under the strain of a hot lamp and an audience of 20 million was any way of obtaining objective information to be used in drafting legislation on a national problem. And why was Mr. Costello asked to repeat before this vast audience information about his activities of twenty years ago which the committee already had?

I do not charge the Kefauver Committee with intolerance or vindictiveness in the conduct of the hearings. Senators Kefauver and Tobey, who played the principal roles, have long been distinguished for their fairness and generally liberal attitudes. But the requirements of the television stage on which they have been appearing make an objective investigation almost impossible. It is too apt to become dull, and if it does it will go off the air. And what will happen when intolerant men take over the management is not comfortable to contemplate.

The vice of this television proceeding is not in the way this particular committee conducted it, but in the proceeding itself. Any tribunal which takes on the trappings and aspects of a judicial hearing, particularly where there is compulsory examination of witnesses, must conform to our judicial traditions, or sooner or later it will develop into a monstrosity that demands reform. Those traditions are: —

1. It must be public and at the same time not a device for publicity.

2. It must protect the innocent even at the cost of letting the guilty escape.

Television has no place in such a picture. For witnesses it is an ordeal not unlike the third degree. On those who sit as judges it imposes the demoralizing necessity of also being actors. For the accused it offers no protection whatever. Former Federal Judge Rifkind recently said that our judicial procedure, "forged through the generations to the single end that issues shall be impartially determined on relevant evidence alone, works fairly well in all cases but one — the celebrated cause. As soon as the *cause célèbre* comes in, the judges and lawyers no longer enjoy a monopoly. They have a partner in the enterprise, and that partner is the press." I would add that when television is utilized in investigations or trials, *causes célèbres* will increase like guinea pigs and still another partner will be added — to wit, the mob.



An Atlantic Story



Born in Berkeley, California, on October 22, 1930, GAY GAER is now finishing her senior year at Radcliffe. She began to write fiction in high school, and last year a group of her stories were submitted in a course conducted by Dr. Albert Guérard at Harvard. She has recently been engaged on a longer work for the course in English composition given by Archibald MacLeish. We published her first story, "The Sisters," in the March Atlantic.

THE ABSENT ONES

by GAY GAER

I WATCHED Al poke his head over Rene's high padded shoulder. He was bulky in gray flannels, and was trying his best to wedge through to her side. "Come on and dance," he said.

"Oh, Al, you simply must heah what Sally just said."

He waited.

"She said, 'If you evah feel like an amethyst just come and call on me.' Isn't that the clevehesht thing? If you evah . . ."

"Come on; let's dance." They left me in the doorway, pushing their way to the space where people were swaying in each other's arms, and a few careened like crazy ships.

"My, you have a wonderful bosom!"

I looked up, and Art McFarlin was peering down at me.

"You really ought to show it more often, you know. Most fascinating."

"I keep it for special occasions."

"Ah, and this is one of them?" He smiled.

"It looks that way."

"You don't sound your usual looped self, Sally. Let me get you some punch."

"That's my glass, there." I pointed to the littered bookshelf near the door. He walked off with the glass, yelling to someone at the other end of the room. He held the glass above his head as he squirmed through a group clustered around an erotic portrait on the side wall. I giggled involuntarily.

"He is an ass, isn't he?"

"Why, Bill, how good to see you. I was hoping you'd be here."

"How are you, Sal? Haven't seen you in a dog's

age. Has Art been making a fool of himself as usual?"

"Oh, not as bad as he can be."

"Well, why don't we dance, before he has time to get back and really put on the donkey."

"Wonderful idea!"

He led me through several clusters of hilarious couples, and I followed, letting him do the "excuse me's." His ingenuous face shone down at me. "We never see you any more. What do you do with yourself?"

"Playtime's over. I'm a working girl now."

"Museum?"

"Yes."

"Do you like it?"

"I'm lazy. I'd almost forgotten what a good dancer you are . . . even in this mess."

"It *has* been ages, Sally. Say, you aren't half as lit as I am. It's almost embarrassing."

"Don't worry. I will be."

"How's Sever?"

"I don't know, Bill. He'll be all right, I guess."

"Well, you and he must come over for dinner sometime. Dora's a marvelous cook."

"I was just going to ask about her."

"She's the same as ever."

"That's fine. You must be very happy."

"Yes. Only five months to go."

"Papa Bill."

Art's hand was on my shoulder. "I've been looking for you, you wretch. Here's your punch," he admonished.

"Thanks, Art. I forgot."

"Like hell," he mumbled. "By the way," he said, pointing toward the painting of a curled-up nude

with a cataract of carrot-colored hair, "how do you like Nana?"

"It's Nana, all right," I said.

"But not as voluptuous as you," he went on.

Bill smiled.

"I wouldn't know," I mused.

"But I'll bet Sever would." Art looked at me laughing. "The lucky guy."

"Shut up," said Bill.

"I'm cutting in," Art persisted, his hands forcing us apart. "Rene's been telling us what a wit Sally is."

"Look here," Bill said, "we're dancing, so be a good chap and cut it out."

"Please — you two, you're pulling me apart. Why don't we sit down."

"Poor Sally," Art said. "Someone's always trying to pull her apart."

We burst our way through the swaying crowd and found an empty couch near the fireplace. Bill and I sat down. Art stood awkwardly in front of us. "It really is lovely," he said to me.

"What is?"

"Your bosom."

"Oh? How many drinks did it take, Art?"

He looked hurt. "Your trouble is you haven't had enough."

"Well, thank you," I said, lifting my glass.

"Still in love with that Sever fellow?" he asked.

"Why don't you blow?" Bill said.

A nice-looking blonde in a red sheath bumped into Art while navigating the room. "Maybe I will," he said. He turned and followed her.

"How's everything?" Bill asked softly. "You look the same except for that drunken glint."

"I'm not drunk," I giggled.

"How's Sever doing?" he asked. "What do the doctors think?"

"I really don't know, Bill."

Al came by looking more stolid than ever in his gray suit. He plumped himself on the arm of the couch. "How are you, Sally?"

"Fine, Al. And you?"

"Fine." His fleshy face suddenly lit up. He reached over and grabbed a handful of peanuts from a dish on the mantel. Then he took aim and placed one neatly inside my dress. I squirmed.

"I've been wanting to do that ever since you said I couldn't be your bridesmaid," he said.

"Why, Al? I was just thinking that pink wasn't your color and I'm set on pink for the bridesmaids."

"Oh, pink would be his color," said Bill.

"Just ripping," said Al. He got up and began to mince his way toward the punch bowl.

I was tired, and I think Bill was, too. We curled up on the couch and looked into the empty, clean fireplace.

"Remember the house party in Sandwich," he asked after a long pause, "when we rode down in the rumble seat and swilled rum to keep warm? How

you've grown up since. You were shocked at us."

"Me, shocked?"

"Oh yes. You refused to even touch the bottle until you got good and cold . . . and then it hurt to ask for a swig."

"I wasn't that way."

"Oh, Sal, you used to be the most awful little prude." He kissed my forehead. "And you never could hold it . . . like now."

Bill sounded fuzzy. I think I smiled. I leaned against him and closed my eyes. When I opened them the room was relatively quiet, and many of the people were gone. Bill was talking to someone I didn't know on my side of the couch. He smiled down at me. "You blacked out," he laughed.

"Oh, no, I've been listening to everything."

"Of course," Bill laughed.

"How's Sever?" the guy beside me asked.

"Oh, I don't know," I said. My voice sounded irritated as it came back.

"Don't they know what's wrong with him?" the fellow persisted.

"No!" I said loudly. "Nobody knows."

"She's tired," Bill explained. "Let me take you home, Sally."

"Why don't we take another drink?"

"It's after three, Sal. I don't like Dora to be alone so long."

"Oh, Bill!"

The fellow beside me rose and stood in front of us. We waited awkwardly while he shifted. "Well, Bill," he said, "I've got to be running along. Nice seeing you."

"Hold on. Maybe I can give you a lift. Coming, Sally?"

"The place is just beginning to be comfortable . . ."

"Why don't you come over for dinner sometime this week?" Bill said. "Our place is always quiet and . . ."

"That's not what I meant," I answered.

"Well, it's late, Sally, and I really don't like to leave Dora alone so long." He turned toward the fellow standing in front of him. "Do you live out toward Sprague Street?"

"Yeah, Bill. That would be wonderful."

Bill started to rise. He paused on the edge of the couch, looking expectantly at me. "Are you coming?" he asked.

"Oh, Bill . . . there's so much I didn't have time to ask you about . . ."

"Another time, Sally. I really must get back."

"I think I'll stay awhile," I said.

"Well . . . so long, then." He got up slowly and stretched.

"So long," the fellow said.

"Things always end up this way, don't they?" I asked.

Bill didn't answer. He and the fellow were moving across the room toward the door.



has built up an enormous following with her magnetic and militant column and her forthright, gusty lectures and broadcasts. After reading Professor Perry Miller's appraisal of "*The Incorruptible Sinclair Lewis*" which appeared in the April *Atlantic*, she wrote from the heart the following letter of corroboration, which she has kindly permitted us to print.

SINCLAIR LEWIS: A POSTSCRIPT

by DOROTHY THOMPSON

DEAR PROFESSOR MILLER: —

May I express my appreciation of your penetrating and appreciative study of Sinclair Lewis in the current *Atlantic* — the more so because, as you observed, so many of the earlier articles utterly (it seemed to me) missed the point of his work and personality?

I think one of the most tragic facets of his nature was his disbelief in his own capacity to evoke love from others. He hurt others, very often out of this frustration. He was, unquestionably, one of the most "difficult" human beings who ever lived. But it was impossible ever to be really angry with him, because, in his case, the old parental saw was really true, "This hurts me more than it does you."

He was incorruptible!

I recall that, early in the Nazi regime, Klaus Mann (son of Thomas) started publishing in exile (as I remember, from Amsterdam) an *émigré* monthly. He wrote Sinclair Lewis describing the paper as a vehicle for young exiled German writers, and asking S.L. to allow his name to be used on the masthead as a "contributing editor." Red refused on the ground that he was not "a young German writer," was unwilling to sponsor a publication which he would be unable to follow, and believed that publications should stand honestly on their own feet. Klaus Mann, however, came out with the first issue before waiting for Red's answer, with his name on the masthead — a fact which was first called to Red's attention by a cabled protest from his German publisher, Ernst Rowohlt. Red's books were still selling extremely well in Germany, and Rowohlt cabled him that the Mann publication was a "disgusting *émigré* sheet" and that his continued association with it would lead to the suppression of his books in Germany.

Now, it would have been simple and truthful for Red to have replied that Mr. Mann had used his name without his consent and despite his refusal — and Nazis or not, Red, as you know, wanted

his books read. Actually, also, he was thoroughly annoyed with Klaus Mann. But his immediate reaction was that his relations with young Mann and his publication were none of Rowohlt's (or the Third Reich's) business! He cabled Rowohlt: —

DEAR ERNST HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY QUESTION MARK DO YOU HONESTLY THINK I WILL LET YOU OR YOUR GOVERNMENT OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD WRITE OR WHERE I SHOULD PUBLISH

Now, Ernst Rowohlt (as his record has shown) is no tower of civil courage. But, right from the heart of Nazi Germany, he cabled back: —

THANK GOD THERE ARE STILL SOME MEN AMONG WRITERS

Red, I later heard (from Rowohlt), was the only writer among those whose names had been exploited on the Mann masthead, and whose works were still published in Germany, who did not yield under similar pressures from their own German publishers. And actually Red's books went on being published and circulated until he wrote *It Can't Happen Here*.

His hunger for "culture" was really deeply moving. Like most writers he was a poor linguist. But there is something wholly admirable in his determination to learn Italian at the age of sixty. Until he was over fifty he had no interest whatever in music. Suddenly he "discovered" it, and thereafter, for years, the phonograph was playing the classics five or six hours a day — sometimes it could be maddening! He hated all games, until in his late middle age he determined to master chess. (This was after our separation, and I don't know what kind of chess player he became.)

But the fanaticism you noted extended to everything. He never did anything for fun. He was a peripatetic self-improvement association — dragging his intimates with him, too, and insisting they

share his earnest efforts, often until their nerves were screaming in rebellion!

He was, essentially, a terrific puritan — a legitimate descendant of that earliest recorded ancestor, one John Lewis, who arrived in America around 1680. Although he threw much money around (and was often shamefully exploited) he insisted that every bill be paid within ten days after its presentation. I am, myself, regarded as an excellent "credit risk," but when he once found out that I was accustomed (by arrangement with one or two department stores) to spacing payments of large bills (for instance, for a winter or spring wardrobe) over a few months, he berated me furiously. "It's simply *stealing!*" he declared. An unpaid debt was a felony, if not a crime! He was formidably upright, though without the slightest religious instinct, which, of itself, would account for that really awful book *The God-seeker*. He was too stiff-necked to kneel — a fault, I think, of the Protestant spirit.

Despite all his rovings, he remained to the end, essentially, a small-town boy. I was deeply moved to learn that he had left instructions that his ashes were to be interred in Sauk Center, beside the grave of his father — that stern and crotchety

man whom Red, with all his fame, had never managed really to impress. To explode, however, the sentimental note at once, my son (and his), who attended the service, described it so vividly that we were both, for a few minutes, helpless with laughter, as — if one may imagine Red's ironic ghost hovering over the scene — he would surely have been! For he could have claimed to have written the script himself, in chuckling satire.

And, though reverently welcoming home to his last rest its most distinguished son, Main Street still had the last word. He left instructions that nothing of a religious nature was to occur in connection with his funeral. But, standing in a blizzard by the grave, the citizenry of Sauk Center recited in unison the Lord's Prayer. Famous son or not, they knew better than he what was befitting! And, again, knowing Red, I think that chuckling (or cackling) ghost aloft would, at that moment, have angrily and scornfully brushed away a tear.

I had not meant to write at such length. But expressing my appreciation of your article has afforded me relief.

Sincerely,

DOROTHY THOMPSON



THIS INKY POOL

by LEONARD BACON

This inky pool is beautiful no doubt,
If one considers it in proper terms
As the realm of larvae and segmented worms,
Where greasy marsh-gas bubbles nauseate trout.
They turn, like soldiers at the rightabout,
From the dark mudhole, which their fear confirms,
Shunning black slime that harbors embryo germs,
Whence one day wings fantastic will flash out,

Diaphanous, above long pitch and eddy,
Where the azalea whitens by the stream,
And May flies seek to live their three-day dream,
Dipping or hovering. Underneath, like fate,
Where water inexorable as time runs steady,
In ambush, iris-belted squaretail wait.



Books and Men



Critic and biographer of Thoreau and Whitman, HENRY SEIDEL CANBY be-

gan his editing as an assistant to Wilbur Cross on the Yale Review. From 1924 to 1936 he was the Editor of the Saturday Review of Literature, and on the founding of the Book-of-the-Month Club, twenty-five years ago, he became the Chairman of its Board of Judges. Now looking back over that quarter century, he singles out those books which he believes to have been milestones in contemporary literature.

BOOKS THAT ARE MILESTONES

by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

I

OPINIONS, tastes, behavior, most of all interests, constantly alter as society flows on like a river. Books sometimes explain this, and they always record it. They are the reporters of history, especially of the always changing mind of a generation. In my twenty-five years as a Book-of-the-Month Club judge, the alteration has been rapid, and the reporters have had plenty to say.

First of all, there has been a general change in interest in the type of books read. It was like a shift from a limited table d'hôte menu to a far-stretching à la carte. The public taste and the public interest shifted, not away from fiction so much as beyond fiction toward nonfiction of every kind. The broadening of direction was emphatic. At least one publisher of seasoned judgment told me at the beginning of the era that the intelligent general public offered a choice of books would at the most take one nonfiction book out of twelve offered, and I knew from my own experience that this had been generally true. Yet the list of titles upon which I am basing this essay runs rapidly into an average of not far below 50 per cent nonfiction, and sometimes the choice touches a higher figure. The cause may have been in part a much increased accessibility of books of many kinds. Yet surely the public had already in 1926, and increasingly afterward, developed a far wider range of interests than had been expected. The old days, which I remember well, when the same general intelligent readers had read apiece, say, a dozen best-selling novels a year, and little else, were going forever. The new swing to nonfiction among popular books gave to both publishers and writers an impetus of the greatest value and importance.

With widely read books, like those of our list, the most obvious reporting of what was going on among us who were readers should be of morals — morals in the broadest sense of the word. Charles Dickens's novels, for instance, in addition to being great and readable books, were impressive records of

the new humanitarianism of England. Have American morals fundamentally changed during this quarter of a century? I do not know. But American moral attitudes certainly have, and the books show it.

Let me begin with language. It is not a very reliable indicator of fundamental morality, but it is a guide to certain tendencies on the shifting border line between morality and immorality when writers begin to make them forceful as well as articulate. Common report has it that Ernest Hemingway was the first reputable author to use a four-letter English word in the dignity of print. Only half a dozen years ago another four-letter word, used by a Negro in a novel where he most probably would have used it, caused a furor throughout the country. It has been three quarters of a century since sexual relationships, regular or irregular, have been taboo in American novels. And anything like a literal description even when devoid of vulgarity was still taboo at the beginning of our twenty-five years and most of all if the words used were realistic. Words, it will be found, offended us much more than acts. Henry James was in no sense the prude that he is supposed to have been. He thought that the "sexuality" of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was notable for its absence, but his language was "vile." I believe that he was alluding to a reference to the softness of female flesh, for I can find nothing else that would attract the attention today even of a postmaster. Writers for the inferior "pulp" of our own first years of the quarter century became expert at describing with warmth suggestive scenes without the use of one "frank" word, and without rebuke.

Here the books on our list, whether scientific or psychological nonfiction, or novels, have registered a wide change, which has swung so far as to invite the charge of immorality (by which, usually, the accuser really means vulgarity, and is sometimes right). In any case, the books of Hemingway, of Steinbeck, of Richard Wright, or such books as *The Hucksters*,

Raintree County, *The Egyptian*, could not have been put upon our list in the first years of the record, and chiefly, though not always, because of language. Dates must be generalized, but I should say that at the beginning of our quarter century the public had admitted sexual scenes as essential to the whole story. Now descriptions are being made articulate, with an advance in truth, and also with a danger to good taste, by a vulgarity that often reveals the author's own lack of artistic feeling.

Have our wars been responsible for this new freedom of printed speech? I do not think so. The books that came after the First World War, even the frank and realistic variety, like *All Quiet on the Western Front*, were, except for "cussin'," what the censor would call clean. More respectable men in wartime heard more dirty language. That is about as far as you can go. The change in the mores of writing may also reflect a more tolerant attitude toward sexual irregularity. It is more probable that it is a reaction against Victorian prudishness, which in itself was a violent reaction against the unrefinement, the roughness, the licentious descriptions of the eighteenth-century novel, and of English life in the days of the late Georgians. Whatever the cause, the change is here and probably irreversible unless sheer vulgarity brings its own reaction.

2

THERE is, however, another change which is unquestionably moral, and is better represented in literature than anywhere else. Here the twenty-five years of books show, in many examples, a wide swing of the compass. We have in recent years admitted a new type of hero, and in certain books made him dominant. He is not the villain, he is not (as with older books) an object of satire. Walt Whitman used a queer invented word for hero which explains exactly what I mean. He called him (or her) the eidólon, the ideal figure, which embodied, or should embody, what the best people of the period admired, or should admire. It was the kind of person they wished, or should wish, to be like, and used as a standard for morality (I do not mean goodness) in the best sense compatible with a full life. There are plenty of books built upon such an eidólon in our list. Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth*, that great pioneer story of the old Northwest, is an example of one kind; the Lincoln of Benét's *John Brown's Body* is another — to which one may add Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's *The Yearling*, Anthony Adverse (a different variety), *Joseph in Egypt*, and to carry up to our own day, John Hersey's *The Wall*, John P. Marquand's *Point of No Return*, or (outside of the novel) *Kon-Tiki* and that charming satire on what happens to extremists when they turn human, *The Little World of Don Camillo*.

Yet the readers as they think back will realize

that a new type of eidólon began to enter our books in, say, the thirties. Hemingway was one of our first innovators, though with a very different show from what was later put on. His brutal men, cruel, scornful of respectable living, were often softhearted, with a core of idealism, as Hemingway evidently is himself. But the emphasis is always on toughness and a contempt for sexual morality, which was to be a characteristic aspect (one only) of our period. Steinbeck is not unlike him. He has deep sentiment combined with a passion against respectability, and a feud against women who protest desires which it is well known they possess. He is right in feeling that it was this unbalance which often made the Victorian novel limp with one boot and a slipper. But he overdoes the boot. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Wayward Bus* will illustrate from our list.

The world-upside-down of manners which such books profess to mirror is different — and one suspects more healthy — from another and more recent change of hero. Frederic Wakeman's *The Hucksters* (1946) is a good example, but there have been dozens since. The scene is usually in New York, the situations usually contrived in the relatively new professions of the radio, moving picture, magazine, or advertising business. The heroes (and heroines) all seem to parallel the new school of candid photography. Everyone looks his worst. They resemble each other in moral attitudes, and are supposed to resemble well-known living characters whom they candidly, and usually most unfavorably, represent. Compared with the novels of the twenties, these books give the impression of being intensely local. New York contracts rather than expands them. They are all defeatist, and their environments are full of jealousy and hate. It is only fair to add that, like the advertisements and promotion which is the business of so many of their characters, they are expertly and sometimes brilliantly written.

Now here is a new type of eidólon. No one wants to be like him. And yet his portrait is not pure satire, for no one in the novel, not even the author, seems to be fully aware of what the trouble is which makes the hero hate his life but be unable to do anything important about it. The hero who would by Henry James have been sympathetically analyzed to the core, by Thackeray given elements of greatness, as in Becky Sharp, by Swift or Pope satirized into nothingness, remains a local phenomenon. Something, whether the roar of fast living, or the pressure of the power to spend, or a nervous sexual urge, has given us a literary type which warns us but does not enlighten.

Fortunately our list shows also that this has been a quarter century of extraordinary widening of interests, so that there never has been a wider choice in reading. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the old stock from which so much great fiction has grown is at least as vigorous as the specialties I have been discussing. If it were only excellence of which

I were writing, there are dozens of novels where the old themes, good as long as human nature remains basically constant, are as successful as ever. For adventure, for studies of manners (with which the novel began), for romance, for the story of simple folk in a local environment, for penetrating realism, for high comedy, where the subject is not as in this essay a change in mores, but new personalities in a new scene, I can supply from the list under my hand instances of quality not generally surpassed in any literary period. In fiction alone let us record Sinclair Lewis, Sigrid Undset, J. B. Priestley, Willa Cather, Arnold Bennett, Virginia Woolf, W. Somerset Maugham, Thornton Wilder, Ellen Glasgow, Margaret Mitchell, Walter D. Edmonds, Kenneth Roberts, Thomas Mann, C. S. Forester, John P. Marquand, Arthur Koestler, Esther Forbes, Sholem Asch, Evelyn Waugh, to add to others mentioned before, or afterward, with different references.

Another instance of fertility in the novel is what might be called the further expansion of the form itself, which now in many instances can only be distinguished arbitrarily from nonfiction (and vice versa). Saint-Exupéry made in his *Night Flight* what was really a novel of man's adventures in a new medium, the air. Franz Werfel's *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* went back to *The Iliad* for its pattern of a novel of courageous defense. Thornton Wilder's stories begin as character sketches, such as *Heaven's My Destination*, but work themselves out indirectly into highly charged novels. The infinitely subtle narratives of Isak Dinesen, in *Seven Gothic Tales*, will leave readers differing as to what is meant, but not as to their fascination. Margaret Mitchell in *Gone With the Wind* (I do not think she meant to) swung from old-fashioned sentimental romance to modern realism, and so straddled both the old and the new South, playing hob with literary definitions. Richard Wright chose autobiography to tell the story of his race in *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, but wrote both as novels. And John Hersey in *The Wall* has frankly used the reporting of a journalist to write one of the great tragic novels of our time. Finally George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* went back to Plato and *Looking Backward* to write a satire where Utopia is reversed — a novel of the Russian "paradise" made into a story of the future that only fanatics of the Kremlin can read without horror, disgust, and a shudder of fear.

3

ONE of the most successful books on the list was H. A. Overstreet's *The Mature Mind* (1949). This popular but excellent psychology is a study of how Americans especially have been slowly developing from a youthful, immature people into an adult nation. Their judgments broaden, their reason balances their emotions, their handling of experience grows sharper and wiser. His material is drawn

from a far wider range than books, but its emphasis upon change is like that in this essay. Another book on the list, Gerald W. Johnson's *Incredible Tale* (1950), shows much the same development, although here it is the American growing up in political maturity both at home and in relations abroad.

Yet for a full consideration of American growing-up, we should be familiar with the long list of what might be called international and national books in these twenty-five years. In James Truslow Adams's *The Epic of America*, of 1931, the historian remarked, with an accent of surprise, that the history of the United States seemed to be of an internal development constantly interrupted by involvements with European revolutions of power, of economies, and most of all of thinking, for which we were not responsible. By 1951 these interruptions of what we regarded as our normal growth had become chronic, and had become a part of our own history, which we disregarded at our peril.

The books which indicate this go far beyond the limits of what was happening abroad. In the early years there is an inrush of semifictional biographies of great European figures of the past — Napoleon, Disraeli, Henry the Eighth, Marie Antoinette, Cervantes, Leonardo da Vinci — as if the interest of the general reader had been suddenly kindled in the old Europe from which we had come so far, and which was at the back of our new embroilments. Russia began to appear on the list.

Yet through all these years is a parallel outpouring of books on America and Americans. After the First World War the American biographies are of a belittling kind, which was called debunking, after William E. Woodward's *Bunk*, in which the term was invented. The idea seemed to be to become "realistic" with our great national figures, which usually meant to take them off the schoolroom walls and make them human — all too human. It was a false start for a new kind of biography, and a careful critic could have noted that deeper studies of America were revealing by social history a United States in the making for two hundred years that was a unique experiment in the long human story, with no parallel in Europe or the past.

Such books on our own past as Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln*, Carl Van Doren's *Benjamin Franklin*, Charles and Mary Beard's *America in Midpassage*, Bernard DeVoto's *The Year of Decision: 1846*, or the biographical-critical series of Van Wyck Brooks were to make a restatement of our history, in more, not less, important terms, and to respond to the sharp and sudden contrasts with Europe which our education in conventional American backgrounds had not prepared us to understand. Such admirable autobiographies as Hans Zinsser's *As I Remember Him*; such surveys of the present as Frederick L. Allen's *Only Yesterday*; such matured and back-and-forward pointing biographies as Catherine Drinker Bowen's *John Adams and the*

American Revolution, are instances that we had come of age in our own introspection, as elsewhere.

Perhaps humor is the best of all commentators on human nature, and it is interesting to note how the growing maturity which has inspired these writers appears also in striking fashion on our list. I do not mean the jolly books, the funny books, the comic adventures and laughable characters. These are perennials as old as civilization, and only a sourpuss would call them immature. I mean such books as *Cheaper by the Dozen*, *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, *Father of the Bride*, or *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*. However, there is a new kind of humor come into our American reading in this quarter of a century — or, if not new, richer, mellow, and with more tang because it is subtly flavored with irony and comes from a profounder philosophy. It is really a new America, if an earlier one as seen by a modern, that Clarence Day tells about in *Life with Father* (1935) and his earlier *God and My Father*. His books have had scores of imitators but none has equaled his special blend of maturity. The approach to humor is characteristically American, the family atmosphere is affectionate, good-natured (when not explosive), and prosperous. And yet the irony is obvious for the Big Businessman — the know-it-all of his day. It is a new and more matured America for which E. B. White is writing in his *Other Men's Meat* and *Here Is New York*. There is a faculty only to be found in ripe civilizations, the power to attack with restrained violence the most serious problems of the times, while *toujours gai* like Don Marquis's alley cat. It illustrates Mark Twain's thesis that there is only one weapon against irrationality and evil — laughter.

This article upon books as reporters of change might depend for its argument upon war books alone and be very convincing. The continuing Industrial Revolution and war in particular have been the two chief promoters of change in our generation. If the reader is old enough to remember the flood of books which was a by-product of the First World War — books autobiographical, poetical, descriptive, fictional — he will be struck instantly by this fact of change. Those published in wartime itself and intended to touch the imagination were all at least tinged with romance, even if a horrid romance; they were rich with heroism, even if it was a little man's heroism, and were based upon a conviction (at least the Anglo-Saxon ones) that we were fighting a kind of crusade. They stated in so many words that war was a tremendous experience and, in spite of danger and boredom, an enviable experience no matter how much one hated it. I can recall no marked exception aside from *Le Feu* of Barbusse.

Except for the poetry, little has survived from these multitudes of books. And it is noteworthy that the one major poet of the decade after the war, Stephen Vincent Benét, whose *John Brown's Body*

was on the list in 1928, chose an earlier war which still seems romantic, and figures like John Brown and Lincoln of heroic proportions for his cast. The very next year a new writer and a new kind of book is on the list. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* gave a different tone to war literature which has persisted. It was the ignoble that figured here, and unhappy common man caught in a slaughter for which he was not responsible, living like a beast while maintaining his loyalty to such ideals as he had. No romance in this war, but a gross realism still fascinating in its novel interest; and no glamorous deeds, but only the powerful hope to escape. In 1927 the delightful *The Case of Sergeant Grisha* of Arnold Zweig showed that there was still humor in war, even if pathetic.

Before the time of the next great war, little humor and less romance are left, except the blend of such love and lust as one finds in the desperate passion in a sleeping bag of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and by the Second World War there was no pretense of glamour, unless of duty well done. From that war there are no great novels yet, although an abundance of brilliant journalism, recounting with an almost objective detachment the incidence of fighting. If there were books that stirred the emotions they came from the secondary results of war, such as Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. Since then, for uplift and the sense of heroic struggle we have had to go to the splendid periods of Winston Churchill, himself a survivor from an earlier time.

In short, war in the last years of our quarter century appears no longer as patriotism, nor heroic. In fact, one hears in the new books the low rumble of revolt against war itself as something the common man will not always endure, though he does not know what to do about it. In fiction war is becoming merely a theme, and the *dramatis personae* contain neurotics, paranoiacs, fanatics of slaughter, who are not so much victims of war as types of unstable minds which exhibit its horrid excesses. The best recent war novel I have read is not about war itself at all, but the story of life in our regular army before Pearl Harbor, where professional soldiers expect war and its preparations to be their life. Their language is a jargon of slang terms and four-letter words, their habitat off duty is the bar and the brothel, since family life is denied them. They live and suffer by codes as strict as the Greek tragedy. And for all the complexity of civilian life is substituted a loyalty to their group and, generally speaking, a hatred of their officers and their parasites. This book, *From Here to Eternity* by James Jones, is not on our list, but has been offered, with due warning, as an alternate selection. War thus is being presented, like labor, or farming, or the entertainment business, or the pursuit of women, as a staple for books, a standard expectation of modern living. We are tough enough now to take it, as the books we are reading show.



Books and Men



LLOYD MORRIS has taught at Columbia, and up until 1947 was best

known for his life of Hawthorne, *The Rebellious Puritan*; in that year he published *Postscript to Yesterday*, a social history of the United States since 1896, a volume in which many contemporary Americans — William James, Mr. Justice Holmes, John Dewey, Pulitzer, Hearst, Luce, Mrs. Jack Gardner, Mary Baker Eddy, and Thorstein Veblen, to name a few — were skillfully outlined against the civilization they helped to shape.

THE YOUNG T.R.

by LLOYD MORRIS

IN 1900, Senator Thomas C. Platt, Republican boss of New York State, determined to have Governor Theodore Roosevelt nominated as the party's candidate for the Vice Presidency. Platt's admiration for Roosevelt was rather less than tepid. He wanted to eliminate the Governor from New York politics, to cancel his influence by making him politically impotent.

Platt's project aroused no enthusiasm in Senator Mark A. Hanna, President McKinley's campaign manager and national party boss. "Don't you realize," Hanna reportedly exploded, "that there's only one life between this madman and the White House?" A millionaire capitalist as well as an astute politician, Hanna considered Roosevelt a dangerous radical. This opinion was shared by the older financiers and industrialists who figured importantly in the party, and it was the view of Wall Street and the business community in general. Few Americans today think of T.R. as in any sense a radical.

The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, selected and edited by Elting E. Morison (Vols. I and II [1868–1900], Harvard University Press, \$20), present T.R. against the background of his era, not ours. They make us contemporary with him, and admit us directly to his personal experience. That he was a picturesque figure is so obvious as to obscure the fact that, in one respect, he was likewise a significant one. More fully than any of his contemporaries, Roosevelt registered the currents that surged through the nation's life during a period of transforming changes. As his correspondence shows, there was scarcely any area of controversy that he did not feel obliged to invade — either because his official position required him to reach some conclusion, or his conscience impelled him to become a partisan, or his curiosity forced him to investigate whatever was stirring up other people.

This first installment of a complete edition of his letters carries Roosevelt from boyhood to his nomi-

nation for the Vice Presidency at the age of forty-two. He graduated from Harvard in 1880. During the next twenty years he served three terms in the New York legislature; campaigned, unsuccessfully, for election as Mayor of New York; became Civil Service Commissioner, Commissioner of Police in New York City, Assistant Secretary of the Navy; formed and led a regiment of Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War; was elected Governor of New York on his return to civilian life. He had likewise been a rancher in Dakota and a hunter of big game in the Far West. He was the author of a dozen volumes that had brought him prestige as a naturalist, historian, and political analyst. The variety of his experience and the range of his interests were exceptional. His letters reveal him as a man whose personality was extremely complex but whose mind was so simple as often to seem naïve.

From youth onward, Roosevelt deliberately forged his personality as an instrument of effective action. He set up, and perpetually revised, an image of the man he wanted to be; by exercising his will, he kept trying to approximate his current image. His natural tendency was to subordinate knowing to doing, intelligence to character. "It is the doing of things after all which really makes life worth living," he assured one friend. "Normally the individual rises to greatness only through labor and strife," he told another, asserting that this doctrine held true for the life of nations also: "It is only through strife — righteous strife — righteously conducted, but still strife, that we can expect to win to the higher levels where the victors in the struggle are crowned." Roosevelt understood life best when he was able to interpret it as a contest between absolute good and absolute evil. This suggests the remarkable simplicity of his mind.

Since he was primarily a moralist, he seldom dealt with any problem without first translating it into an ethical issue. He was often indifferent to the

real nature of the problem; what concerned him were the moral values that he attached to alternative solutions. But although his conclusions in every field were likely to be predicated on moral judgment, his judgment was seldom determined, as he liked to think, by his conscience. He was a practical politician with a marked talent for strategy. He was likewise an ambitious man whose self-conceit and outstanding aptitude for self-dramatization may have had their source in a profound, if unconscious, personal insecurity. These other facets of Roosevelt's personality frequently shaped the decisions which he justified, so eloquently, on moral grounds.

Roosevelt's egotism and his ability to dramatize himself appear early and often in his letters. When three horse-thieves stole a boat from Roosevelt's Dakota ranch to make their escape from the region, he and two of his men went to capture them. In his correspondence, the adventure assumes epical proportions and, characteristically, Roosevelt informed his friend Henry Cabot Lodge, "I got the three horse-thieves in fine style." The celebrated charge up San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War became, in Roosevelt's mind, his personal heroic exploit. He not only extracted from it every political advantage that it was capable of yielding, but schemed endlessly to secure the Medal of Honor. "If I didn't earn it," he told Lodge, "then no commissioned officer ever can earn it." He failed to obtain the Medal of Honor, and his book *The Rough Riders* drew a spoofing review from Finley Peter Dunne, the humorist "Mr. Dooley." There is abundant evidence in the letters that Roosevelt was what actors call a scene-snatcher. His avidity for the limelight sometimes made the voice of conscience very weak indeed.

As a practical politician, Roosevelt found that he had to adapt his convictions to existing circumstances. He was repeatedly compelled to compromise. This necessity disturbed him until he hit upon a characteristic justification; he gave expediency a moral status. He advocated learning "to accept the best possible in lieu of the unattainable best — a lesson which we all have to learn when we strive for results." How far did his cult of expediency enable him to indulge in tergiversation with a clear conscience and develop a capacity for stretching the truth to suit the exigencies of the moment? Lincoln Steffens, who knew him well, said that T.R. was an honest man: he could not tell a lie until he had made himself believe it.

Certain passages in Roosevelt's letters illustrate this tendency. By New York law, only citizens who had been residents of the state for the five years preceding an election were eligible for the governorship. In 1898 Roosevelt had made an affidavit, for tax purposes, of residence in Washington that disqualified him for nomination — but with the help of Elihu Root he found a way around

that. Again, while Roosevelt's nomination for the governorship by the Republican Party was still uncertain, he was approached by the Independents to head their ticket. They always asserted that he accepted, but after a conference with Senator Platt, he ditched them. In the light of other information relating to this episode, two of Roosevelt's letters about it — written on a plane of the highest ethical principle — seem to fall somewhat short of candor.

The terms on which Roosevelt accepted his nomination for the governorship were explicit, and they indicate his tolerance of expedient compromise. He undertook to adopt no policy, to agree to no important measure or appointment, without prior consultation with Boss Platt, and to consult Platt fully on all important matters. He promised to seek constantly to make the interests of the Republican machine identical with those of the public. But when Platt's emissary, Lemuel Ely Quigg, reduced Roosevelt's oral acceptance to writing, T.R. nervously protested, "Your representation of what I said was *substantially* right; that is, it gave just the *spirit*. But I don't like the wording of some of your sentences." He wished to make certain that he had not been represented as consenting to act otherwise than in accordance with his conscience. "In short," he wrote Quigg, "I want to make clear that there was no question of pledges or promises, least of all a question of bargaining for the nomination; but that I promptly told you the position I would take if I was elected Governor and suggested what I thought it would be best for both Senator Platt and myself to do. . . ." He wanted the governorship. He had agreed to accept Platt's domination. But he couldn't endure facing that fact. It had somehow to be translated into its opposite.

It is no wonder that Roosevelt despised "reformers" and, with contempt, described many of the leading ones of the time as "professional impracticables." At the end of his term as Governor, he asserted that he had never "compromised unworthily or for my own advantage." He hoped that the public would realize "that I had striven to do the best work that I could possibly do with the tools as they actually were, and to accomplish results by coming to agreement with the men through whom alone they could be accomplished."

Roosevelt's intellectual limitations were as marked as his indefatigable propensity for expressing himself on any subject under the sun. The results may have exasperated some of his eminent correspondents, but they will often amuse the contemporary reader. Like many another conscientious moralist, Roosevelt was a thoroughly happy man. He was seldom afflicted by doubts, and his abysmal ignorance of one subject was conducive to a perennial euphoria. That subject was himself.

BOOKS

The Editors Like

Personal History

FAMILY KINGDOM by *Samuel Woolley Taylor*. (McGraw-Hill, \$3.50.) Life with Father, Father's six adoring wives, and thirty-five brothers and sisters. This is the extraordinary story of the Mormon Apostle John W. Taylor, who refused to give up plural marriage after his Church renounced it.

SALAD DAYS by *Bellamy Partridge*. (Crowell, \$3.50.) The latest installment of Mr. Partridge's unchronological autobiography is a cheerful, nostalgic memory book of the 1890s, when, as a collegian, his serious concerns were the height of his collar and the drape of his seven-button coat.

CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE by *Vladimir Nabokov*. (Harper, \$3.00.) A stylish and delightful memoir of boyhood in the home of a distinguished liberal leader of pre-revolutionary Russia.

Genius at Work

THE MAESTRO by *Howard Taubman*. (Simon & Schuster, \$5.00.) Mr. Taubman has written a first-rate account of the fascinating career of Arturo Toscanini. Rich in anecdote, free of musical jargon, and based on close acquaintance with the Maestro.

HENRY JAMES by *F. W. Dupee*. (Sloane, \$4.00.) In contrast to so many of the books about James, Mr. Dupee's critical biography has the distinction of having a singularly balanced perspective and of not seeking to complicate his subject's complexity. It is compact, lucid, and gracefully written.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN by *Theodore Huff*. (Schuman, \$4.50.) Along with a fully documented chronicle of Chaplin's life, loves, and legal and political embarrassments, Mr. Huff offers a meticulous study of the Chaplin films. The magic of Chaplin's art rather eludes Huff's clinical analysis, but it speaks for itself in the book's 150 stills from the movies.

DAMNED OLD CRANK: Self-Portrait of E. W. Scripps edited by *Charles R. McCabe*. (Harper, \$3.50.) An extraordinary autobiography by one of America's greatest newspaper publishers, dictated during his years as an ocean-going recluse aboard his yacht.

The Better Mysteries

THEY CAME TO BAGHDAD by *Agatha Christie*. (Dodd, Mead, \$2.50.) A highly skilled mystery story writer turns to espionage and international intrigue. The results are excellent. Victoria Jones, bird-brained stenographer, is a welcome change from the excessively brainy Hercule Poirot.

THE IVORY DAGGER by *Patricia Wentworth*. (Lippincott, \$2.50.) Still coughing her little cough and clicking her knitting needles, Miss Silver does it again. (So could anyone else with so fortunate a witness as young Frederick proved to be.)

MURDER GOES TO PRESS by *Cicely Cairns*. (Macmillan, \$2.50.) A genuine puzzler, uncommonly well written. The demise of an ogreish feature editor in a thoroughly plausible Fleet Street situation.

THE CASE AGAINST BUTTERFLY by *Gregory Tree*. (Scribner's, \$2.50.) One after another, the participants in *The Case* tell their own stories of what happened. This very original form achieves a rattling good story, just about guessproof.

Reader's Choice

BY

CHARLES J. ROLO



How do the U.S. novelists who emerged from the Second World War compare with those who emerged from the First? **John W. Aldridge**, a young teacher at the University of Vermont, is the first critic to explore this question in a book: *After the Lost Generation* (McGraw-Hill, \$3.75), subtitled "a critical study of the writers of two wars." Mr. Aldridge takes a retrospective glance at Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Dos Passos, then discusses eleven novelists of the forties — Robert Lowry, Alfred Hayes, Vance Bourjaily, Norman Mailer, John Horne Burns, Irwin Shaw, Merle Miller, Gore Vidal, Paul Bowles, Truman Capote, and Frederick Buechner. These eleven were selected, Aldridge explains, because "they all grew up and began to write in the atmosphere of war, because they form, in fact, a 'war generation.'" Aldridge's line-up seems to me shaky here and there, but I've no wish to argue about his choices beyond noting one inexplicable omission: John Hersey.

In terms of literary time, the World War II generation of novelists is still more or less in its infancy, with the result that Aldridge's book suffers from a certain air of prematureness. Six of his young writers are studied on the basis of a single novel, and several of the books which he examines just don't seem worth a serious critical analysis. But within the limitations of his material, Aldridge has something substantial to say. His *After the Lost Generation* is a clearly written, carefully thought out, and generally interesting commentary on the contrasting outlook of two generations of Americans.

Hemingway, Dos Passos, and company — fiercely disillusioned by the war, and coming of age amid the breakdown of traditional values by science — found an impetus to creativity in the very intensity of their "lostness." Revolt and negation, so passionately felt, became values (to be sure, limited and immature) in terms of which the novelist could, for a time, discover dramatic significance in his experience of chaos. Chaos has also been the typical subject matter of the novelists of World War II, but, in Aldridge's view, this generation lacks even the values of revolt — it grew up conditioned to chaos and relatively free of illusions. It could never be lost "because somehow it had never been found." The great dilemma of today's young novelists is the problem of giving meaning and emotional impact to

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their experience in an age without a solid framework of values.

The eleven new writers whom Aldridge discusses are seen to have reacted to the problem in four different ways. There has been an escape into journalism: a reportorial treatment of war and of facts which are dramatic in themselves. There has been an attempt to find new themes with new meanings of their own, the principal discoveries being homosexuality and racial conflict. Writers such as Capote and Buechner have cloaked their lack of something significant to say in richly embroidered technique. Writers such as Merle Miller and Irwin Shaw have resorted to affirmative conclusions not genuinely warranted by the body of their story.

In trying to summarize briefly Aldridge's argument, I have run the risk of misrepresenting him: his book certainly pays its respects, and discerningly, to the talents of the new writers. Their novels, he notes, are generally speaking better-written, more expertly constructed, and more knowing than those of the twenties. Aldridge stands, in fact, at the opposite pole to those literary journalists who keep querulously berating the serious young writers for not producing healthy, hopeful fiction that will nourish "the great audience." The special merit of Aldridge's commentary is that it steadily points up the intimate and necessary connection between the problems of the artist and the moral climate of his time. Every age gets precisely the novels it deserves.

A house in Brooklyn

In his second novel, *Barbary Shore* (Rinehart, \$3.00), Norman Mailer makes a sharp departure from the naturalism of *The Naked and the Dead*. The new book — also an ambitious story, with a fairly complex pattern of personal relationships and tensions — has a far stronger imaginative coloring, and it shows a remarkable advance in Mailer's writing: his style has become rounder, more flowing, and even tinged with poetry. But in *Barbary Shore* the parts are more impressive than the whole. In the final analysis, it is not, I feel, a successfully realized novel.

Mailer's narrator, Mikey Lovett, is a young man in his mid-twenties with "no past" — just a few hazy memories, such as that he was always poor; a scar behind his ear suggests that he was probably wounded in the

war. Lovett takes a cheap room in a boarding house in Brooklyn Heights with the intention of writing a novel, but soon he finds himself increasingly absorbed in the lives of the other people under the same roof. His landlady, Mrs. Guinevere, is a blowzy, vulgarly genteel ex-burlesque queen, perennially in slippers and peignoir, and with a husband who remains invisible. The two lodgers are seemingly commonplace, but there is something indefinably puzzling about them. McLeod, a neat, solitary man of fifty, claims to be a window dresser in a department store. Hollingsworth is an oafish, nattily dressed young Babbitt, a mixture of Y.M.C.A.-good fellowship and smug, small-time lechery. A third tenant moves in, a hysterical Bohemian girl, Lannie, who sometimes talks like a character out of Saroyan and sometimes seems to have escaped from the world of Truman Capote.

In due course, it turns out that Hollingsworth is a government agent; Lannie is somehow associated with him; and McLeod was for fifteen years a leading figure in the Communist Party and is now a discredited "Old Bolshevik," anguished at the Party's betrayal of its early promise. Hollingsworth's assignment is to obtain an important "little object" which McLeod stole while working in a government office; but he decides to double-cross his organization and take over the "object" himself. After a curious series of interrogations, at which Lovett and Lannie are present, McLeod wearily agrees to Hollingsworth's terms, but insists on making an impassioned statement of his credo — that the two leading economic systems of today are both based on exploitation and both doomed; and that, after the Colossi are shattered by the coming war, men like Lovett, men unburdened by the guilt and failures of the past, will start the true Socialist Revolution.

The fuzzy political nihilism of the novel's underlying idea ("plague on both houses") has called for a story deliberately steeped in grotesquerie and in a kind of pointlessness. But in trying to create this tone, Mailer tends to produce an impression of outright make-believe. The characters seem to be playing a game of mystifying the reader; their motivation and their conduct are at times inexplicable. *Barbary Shore* never quite achieves — as it is clearly intended to achieve — the coherence

of a political parable. It is a good illustration of what John Aldridge has to say about the new writers' failure to impose dramatic meaning on their material. It is also, I should add by way of corrective, an original and absorbing story of some very odd goings on in a house in Brooklyn Heights. Mailer has certainly furnished further evidence that he has one of the stronger talents of his generation. His work would gain considerably, I suspect, if he were to find a way out of the political purgatory in which he appears to be wandering.

Tales of five countries

The Man Who Was Loved (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.00) is the first collection of short stories published in the United States by an uncommonly talented writer, **James Stern**, whose two previous collections appeared only in England, and who has been described as "one of the least known authors with the most high reputations." A few years ago, Mr. Stern published in this country a nonfiction study of post-war Germany, *The Hidden Damage*, which displayed a singular assemblage of gifts: a fine ear for speech, a remarkable economy in summing up a scene or a character, and a two-angled vision of events which gave the reader a purely objective picture and a keenly understanding viewpoint. These gifts are manifest in *The Man Who Was Loved*, and a further one that is rare today among short story writers — a capacity to excite the reader, within the compass of a quietly keyed story, with brief, vividly dramatic bits of action.

Mr. Stern writes, in this volume, about Ireland, where he was born; England, where he was educated; Germany and the African veldt, where he once lived; and New York, where he lives now. His twelve stories are told with a subtly selective and revealing artistry, and in the voice of a highly civilized and intelligent adult. The title piece is about a British Major in South Africa, famed for his snake-killing and much beloved by whites and blacks alike, whose death shows that his white friends' love is weaker than their prejudice. "The Broken Leg" portrays an English fox-hunting couple whose parental affections hinge on their son's prowess in the saddle. "The Idolator of Degas" registers a devastating comment on human

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Maybe it's just a little early for vacation but it's never too early to *think* about vacation. And speaking of a vacation, maybe you're one of those bookish persons who thinks of your summer's rest as a large vacant space entirely devoid of printed material — no books, no magazines, no newspapers, thank you. That's okay with me, but then this column's not for you, so don't bother to read further. On the other hand, if I know you (the way I don't know me), you'll probably be looking for something to read the second day out. Got your pencil and paper? Here are a few suggestions.

* * * * *

1. *The Heart of Fame* by Giles Playfair (\$3.00), son of the famous English actor-manager Sir Nigel Playfair and author of the definitive life of *Kean*. See if it's not the best novel about a matinee idol you've ever read. Clive Brook, Claude Rains, Margaret Webster, Basil Rathbone, Henry Hull, Roland Young are among the people who certainly ought to know and who've written in praise of *The Heart of Fame*. 2. *Venture in the East* by Bruce Lancaster (\$3.00), historical novelist extraordinary. This one's about 17th century Japan, when the Dutch East India Company had a rich but precarious foothold there. Mr. Lancaster was for five years American vice consul at Kobe, knows his Japanese language and history, writes vividly an immensely colorful story. 3. *A Rough Shoot* by Geoffrey Household (\$3.00). A superb hue-and-cry story by the author of *Rogue Male*. 4. *Kindling* by Frederick Wight (\$3.00). A novel of violent passions, of a man who was weak and a woman who was strong. Everything happens in one of those Cape Cod villages which were once self-sufficient communities of seamen and now live off the summer tourist crop. These are all Atlantic Monthly Press Books.

* * * * *

5. *The Hunter* by James Aldridge (\$3.00), whose previous novel, *The Diplomat*, has earned him a reputation as a major novelist on both sides of the Atlantic. *The Hunter* is entirely different, a wonderful story of the Big North that will remind you of the best of Jack London. Roy MacNair, the trapper-hunter hero, is a trail-breaker, "a man among men; and, like all of his kind, an ultimate victor over human despair." He's a modern Odysseus, this last frontiersman on our continent, and you'll find him a man after your own heart. — L. B.

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vanity. The keynote of the book is variety, a refreshing absence of pattern. With a couple of exceptions, these tales have an unpretentious perfection. They are warmly felt and expertly entertaining.

Mr. Agate's ego

"To me he outranks Pepys," writes Jacques Barzun, in his Introduction to the diary of a remarkable man, the late **James Agate**, whose fame has not yet carried across the Atlantic. Mr. Agate (who died in 1947), besides being dean of the London drama critics, was book reviewer for a daily paper, film critic, commentator for the BBC, popular lecturer, universal godfather to the ambitious young in acting and writing, novelist and biographer, breeder of horses, enthusiast for cricket and golf — and, during the last fifteen years of his life, author of nine volumes of autobiographical diary called *Ego*, which won him thousands of devotees in England. A section of this work — the last two installments (January, 1945–June, 1947) — is now offered to American readers under the title *The Later Ego* (Crown, \$4.00).

Mr. Barzun is, I think, indulging in Introduction-writer's license when he puts Agate's diary above Pepys's — Agate's contains far more topical reference of the perishable kind, but I fully share Barzun's delight in this exhilarating work. Agate's brother once said of him, "His income and his intestines fill his whole life," a sweeping libel which, however, makes a point: here is an autobiographer whose chief trouble is income tax and not inner conflict; who has succeeded in living on genial terms with his ego and is able, when necessary, to take it down a peg with humor. In Agate's journal, started in his mid-fifties, you will find no such intimate revelations as in Boswell's, and none of the soul-searching of Gide's. Its great strength is its unfailing liveliness and wit — it is a storehouse of varied pleasures for the educated reader.

An old friend of Agate's, in his obituary notice, admirably summed up the flavor of the man's personality: "As a critic he was cogent, never smooth, often belligerent, often capricious . . . full of notions and allusions and audacities, full of sound and fury too, but always signifying something. . . . His prose was lively and prickly, but not that of a great stylist. . . . Like Falstaff in more

ways than one, he was not only witty in himself but the direct occasion of wit. . . . He had a formidable amount of charm."

The diary served Agate as a vat into which he poured his unquenchable verbal energy, his enormous fund of knowledge, and his prodigious interest in living. He defends opera in foreign languages, on the ground that the sense often murders the enchantment of the music. He explains his passion for babies and cats. He writes epitaphs for the war criminals in the style of Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe. He writes to a friend whose book he has read in manuscript: "Have corrected your spelling. Also your Italian, German, French, and occasionally your English. . . . Have amended your quotations. . . . Titivated your titles. . . . Rationalized your punctuation. . . . In short, I have put this entrancing book right in all matters of fact and left only its errors of taste and judgment."

Agate says of an actress: "In the dictionary of her playing, to ask Mrs. Smith to stay to dinner is like Circe enticing Ulysses." He says of Oscar Wilde: "He touched nothing which he did not chichify." He makes a New Year's Resolution: "To do the work of two men instead of three." He rejoices that one of the greatest ambitions of his life has finally been realized — he has been elected President of the Hackney Horse Society.

The Duchess and the painter

Lion Feuchtwanger, whose historical fiction has enjoyed immense popularity, has chosen for his latest hero Francisco Goya; and has built his novel, *This Is the Hour* (Viking, \$3.95), around Goya's love affair with Doña Maria del Pilar Teresa Cayetana, Duchess of Alba. When Doña Cayetana selected Goya as her lover, he was already in his middle forties, stout, and almost deaf; the Duchess, sixteen years younger, was a renowned beauty and a *grande amoureuse*, whose escapades were talked of throughout Madrid. She remained the ruling passion in Goya's life until she died, at forty, in 1802.

This is a subject and a period which offer the historical novelist an infinity of riches. As Court Painter to Carlos IV and a favorite at court, Goya lived close to the center of the contemporary stage; as an artist and a man who had grown up in great poverty, he perceived and was stirred

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by the evils of his time. Spain (cut off from its Empire by the British fleet) was critically impoverished and in decay. The aging Queen set the tone at court with her unbridled sensuality and extravagance. The country's direction was in the hands of her favorite, Manuel Godoy, a young army officer suddenly elevated to First Minister. The Inquisition, confronted with the spreading ideas of the Enlightenment, was waging a fearful campaign against heresy. The nobility, with few exceptions, was firmly opposed to every form of change.

This Is the Hour (a Book-of-the-Month Club selection) is chiefly interesting as a crowded canvas, done in primary colors, of this decisive period in Spanish history — the period in which Spain effectively isolated itself from the forward march of Western Europe. Feuchtwanger's book is not, of course, the kind of historical narrative, such as Catherine Drinker Bowen's, which sticks to documented evidence. It is fiction; and occasionally it rearranges fact to suit the author's convenience (Goya, for instance, was cross-examined by the Inquisition for his *Caprichos* three years before the Duchess's death, not after it); occasionally it plumps for the dramatic in favor of the probable (the legend that the Duchess was Goya's model for his famous *Maja Desnuda* — the Duchess was thirty-eight when the picture was painted and the model is a young girl of very different build). Still, if this is fiction, it is also intended to be history, and I can't help wondering why Mr. Feuchtwanger has so sedulously avoided mentioning dates. One never knows what year it is.

As a novel, Feuchtwanger's book is no great shakes. The characters give the impression of having been wrenched from real life and told to behave in a manner befitting "colorful" characters in a historical romance. The writing is an execrable tissue of clichés and is pitched in a key which the following sentence may suggest: "Mad and alluring, challenging and alarming, lay the future before him." There is enough genuine drama in Goya's life without this kind of phony overexcitement.

Policy for the West

Peace Can Be Won (Doubleday, \$2.50) by Paul G. Hoffman, administrator of ECA from its inception until last October, is a brisk little

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book which makes a timely contribution to the great debate on U.S. foreign policy. What gives special interest to Mr. Hoffman's program for "waging peace" is that its author cannot conceivably be regarded as a leftist do-gooder or an impractical theorist. As Mr. Hoffman points out at the start, he speaks as a Midwestern businessman, who was reared in the spirit of rugged individualism and who was once "by instinct and indoctrination" an isolationist.

In *Peace Can Be Won*, Mr. Hoffman joins hands with the growing school which accepts the idea that even uneasy "co-existence" with the present Russian government is impossible; but which holds that a preventive war would be majestic folly, and believes that a policy aimed at more than "mere containment" could, in due course, bring about a crack-up of the Soviet regime without a military showdown. The latter point, though of course highly speculative, is perhaps not quite the fantasy it would have seemed three years ago. Mr. Hoffman's chapter on ECA is a forceful reminder of the really remarkable gains made against Communism in Western Europe — a story which dramatizes the far-reaching potentialities of economics and diplomacy as weapons against the Kremlin.

Mr. Hoffman outlines his program in terms of four fronts — military, economic, political, and ideological — and he gives a high priority to helping the Europeans build up a defense force of fifty divisions. This will entail, despite the extent of European recovery, a heavy contribution from the United States, for the Marshall Plan did not envisage the need for large-scale European rearmament. All in all, the United States must be prepared, says Hoffman, to devote 50 billion dollars annually for the next three years to military expenditures. He argues, with robust confidence, that the American economy can thrive under this burden, provided that firm anti-inflation measures are put into effect. In the interests of the West's economic health, he also advocates a drastic reduction of U.S. customs duties (to help the Europeans earn dollars) and a reduction in the government subsidies which are keeping our farm prices "unrealistically high."

All forms of foreign aid and technical assistance should be unified, Hoffman recommends, under an Over-

seas Economic Administration which would have equal rank with the other departments of government. This organization would take over the present setup of ECA and it would absorb the Point Four program now administered by the State Department.

On the propaganda front, Mr. Hoffman also urges the creation of a single Overseas Information Agency, headed by an administrator with cabinet status: at present, for instance, the Marshall Plan has an information program which is independent of the U.S. Information Services.

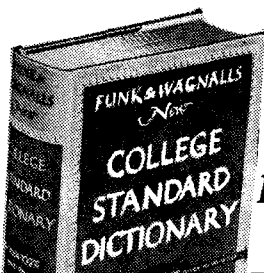
Our current expenditures on propaganda — a puny fraction of the funds matched against us by the Communists — should, says Hoffman, be tripled, and 15 per cent earmarked for secret activities (such as financing the spread of anti-Stalinist printed matter behind the Iron Curtain). The total cost of his program of economic and political warfare would be, Hoffman estimates, around 3 billion dollars annually. Barbara Ward and others have placed the cost of a dynamic anti-Communist policy a good deal higher, and it is possible that Hoffman's avowed optimism is present in his accounting. In any event, as Mr. Hoffman impresses upon his readers, to wage peace expensively is infinitely cheaper than having to wage war.

Potpourri

THE MIRACULOUS BARBER by Marcel Aymé. Harper, \$3.00.

This is the third novel published in this country by the most entertaining of contemporary French writers. It is a subtly mocking satire, touched with fantasy, of the unedifying condition of French society and politics in the mid-thirties. A wealthy industrialist of flawless respectability dies mysteriously at luncheon. His wife discovers that he had a mistress. His newly married daughter discovers that her husband, an athlete, gives priority to outdoor sports, and she becomes involved with a young tough who, for economic reasons, is affiliated with an elderly pederast. The other characters include a typically Gallic elder novelist, bucking for a decoration; an old soldier burning to liquidate the Popular Front; and two arty young ladies who have fed on avant-garde ideas not wisely but too well.

A murder and a strike keep the plot humming. And eventually all problems are cynically settled by a miracle-working



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barber, who typifies the opportunism of the *Français moyen* in the thirties. Aymé's book is very funny, terribly true, and, of course, quite sad.

INSURRECTION by Liam O'Flaherty.
Little, Brown, \$3.00.

The author of *The Informer* gives us another superbly written story of violence in Ireland, this time an account of the Dublin Easter Uprising of 1916. Bartley Madden, grievously afflicted with a hang-over, is longing to get back to the good life of Connemara when he sees a raggedy band of civilians storm the Post Office on Easter Monday. Very soon, he is possessed by "The Idea" and committed to the fight, and we follow him through it to the last suicide stand. O'Flaherty's story brings to life, with unblinking honesty, all the disparate strains in the Irish spirit manifested in the foredoomed rebellion. His taut, humorous, tragic little novel is, within its modest compass, completely successful.

• • • • •
JOURNEY FOR OUR TIME by the Marquis de Custine. Pellegrini & Cudahy, \$4.00.

In 1839, a Frenchman devoted to the monarchic principle visited the Russia of Nicholas I, whose absolutism aroused roughly the same hatred and admiration throughout Europe as the absolutism of Joseph Stalin. The fierce disillusionment of Custine's sharp-eyed report (edited and translated by Phyllis Kohler) parallels that of so many Western Communists of the nineteen-thirties who saw the promised land for themselves. In his Introduction to the book, former Ambassador Walter Bedell Smith observes: "I could have taken many pages verbatim from his journal and after substituting present-day names and dates . . . have sent them to the State Department as my own official reports." But aside from the intriguing parallels between then and now, which can easily be pressed too far, Custine's journal is also a vividly observed historical document—a brilliant travelogue.

SULEIMAN THE MAGNIFICENT by Harold Lamb. Doubleday, \$5.00.

Harold Lamb has a genius for making history enticing without its ceasing to be history, and Suleiman is a subject made to order for his romantic temperament. For here is the story of a conqueror of "gigantic stature" who took Turkish power to the walls of Vienna, and who, at heart, had no great appetite for conquest; a progressive ruler whose reforms weakened the preponderance of the military in Turkey, and who encouraged the arts, learning, and religious tolerance; a man immortalized as "the magnificent," who was silent, austere, enigmatic. Lamb's book is a fascinating and reflective study of a great personality, his empire and his epoch.

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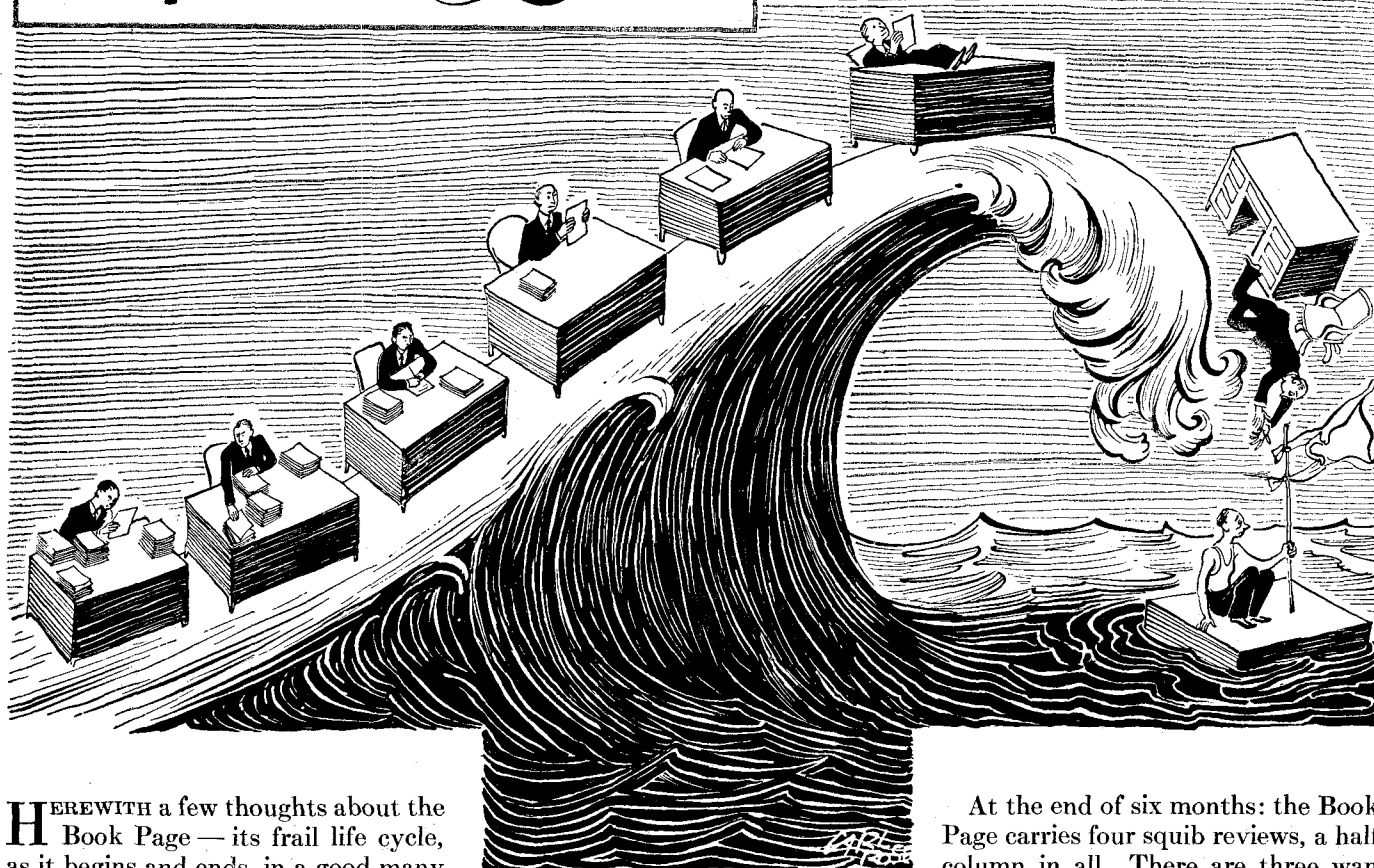
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ACCENT ON LIVING



HEREWITH a few thoughts about the Book Page — its frail life cycle, as it begins and ends, in a good many newspapers.

The saga opens up when the Advertising Director tells the Managing Editor that the sheet is missing out on publishers' advertising. There ought to be a Book Page, regular feature, reviews, jottings and notes, literary stuff. Worth giving the works — a whole page, maybe two. Might even get some circulation out of it. People read books, apparently. Why wouldn't they read some book reviews? (Who knows what wild scheme the public might not go for?)

The proposal gets general endorsement. The paper has occasionally used "reviews" by staff members. It paid for them by giving the reviewer the book and a by-line. But the new scheme calls for a genuine "Literary Editor" and all the trimmings.

The paper hires a Literary Editor and throws him a huge party. Here goes for the big time! Watch us grow! Who said this wasn't a hot literary town?

The Literary Editor pitches in — everything dandy. The first Book Page has four columns of reviews and

THIS MONTH

four columns of significant-looking book advertising. Next week: same thing. Fine business.

Third week: a breakfast food ad seems to have been mislaid, somehow, on the Book Page; issue offers three columns of reviews, two columns of publishers' advertising, three columns of Poplets.

At this point, a friendly little luncheon conference is held by the Literary Editor, Managing Editor, and Advertising Director. Their decision is that there isn't enough book advertising to sustain three columns of reviews. The Literary Editor is cut to a two-column quota. He solves this by canning his column "Browsing About" and sticking to individual reviews.

The next issue reiterates the Poplets ad — plus a fascinating list of used cars offered by Madman Jones, plus a sell-your-diamonds-for-cash invitation that one of the local display men has bagged.

At the end of six months: the Book Page carries four squib reviews, a half column in all. There are three wan little book advertisements aggregating thirty lines. The rest of the page is occupied by Florida resorts and a "reader" about the new through Pullmans to Miami, no more bothersome change at the Junction. The Literary Editor seems to be doing a lot of drinking.

Five years later: the Literary Editor has long since gone over the hill. The Book Page offers a short list (selected and typed by an office boy) under the heading "This Week's New Books." There is one ad, with coupon offer, for a new cookbook put out by a direct-mail outfit. The rest of the thoroughly unbookish page is filled by the "Monday only — 1¢ Sale" of a retail drug chain.

At this point the Advertising Director tells the Managing Editor that the sheet is missing out on publishers' advertising. There ought to be a Book Page. . . .

The career cycle of a business executive proves, on scrutiny, to be similar.

Assume the executive, Doakes, is a

beginner, a young man, inexperienced, bright, determined to make himself useful. Given various tasks, he works like a dog at them. Because most of them are childishly simple anyhow, he masters them quickly, is soon accomplishing immense quantities of effective work.

On this basis, more work is given the rising young hustler. And as the man who actually does the work, he knows more about it than anyone else around the place. "Ask Doakes — he has the whole story" or "Let's give this one to Doakes — he's good at this sort of stuff."

Doakes begins to be overburdened. As new and more important responsibilities fall to him, he is obliged to farm out some of the lesser routines. He reaches a point where he can afford to do nothing unless it is terribly important. To get there, he has farmed out every last one of his routine assignments. He is too big a man, his company tells him, to waste time

on what can just as well be done by underlings.

Doakes no longer knows the meaningful details of the jobs he has delegated to others. He deals only with important matters.

But the terribly important things persist, mysteriously, in presenting problems of detail. Budgets, quotas, estimates, adjustments that Doakes could formerly rattle off to the last dime become perplexing to him. He enters a phase of asking questions, trying to keep up with what is going on.

The uninformed questions that Doakes seems to be raising so frequently cause some misgivings among his colleagues. Is he really so ignorant as all that? Doesn't he know the Altoona territory was redistricted three years ago and that Klempen-furth is now in Topeka? That the override arrangement with Simpkins applied only to the Amerozco business and not to the rest of Pettengill's ac-

counts? (Pettengill is fit to be tied, boiling.)

Doakes's efforts are worse than ignorant: they are a nuisance, they get in the way. Doakes comes to be regarded as a veritable bottleneck. The people who have to get things done start by-passing Doakes.

Finally — and there simply aren't enough board chairmanships to take care of the Doakeses — the executive committee asks itself a question: "What on earth *does* Doakes do around this place anyhow?"

Meanwhile the two executives just below Doakes in rank are feverishly divesting themselves of routine tasks in order to be available for work that is terribly important. One of them will inherit the mantle of Doakes.

And far down the list, a bright young hustler is working his head off on all manner of new and delightful assignments. Doing very well, they say.

CHARLES W. MORTON

EIGHT-DAY EL DORADO

by JOHN D. VOELKER

JOHN D. VOELKER was serving as prosecuting attorney of Marquette County, Michigan, until the election last fall. He is now practicing law in Ishpeming.

ON the hot morning of June 1, 1949, Frank Russell, Rege Comer, and I were prospecting with Geiger counters near a trout stream southeast of Ishpeming, Michigan. The area lies near the heart of the Lake Superior iron range on the Upper Peninsula. We had gone there because I had recalled from previous fishing trips the unusually heavy dark red stain on the rock outcrops in that vicinity — a condition normally favorable to the presence of radioactive deposits.

Russell was a newspaperman, Comer a free-lance geologist, and I a mere middle-aged lawyer. About 11 A.M. we met at Comer's jeep and sensibly had a cold beer. Russell moved and I seconded another of Comer's cold beers. Motion carried — two to one.

Again we shouldered our Geiger counters and took off. Fighting deer flies and brush, I finally waded across the trout stream, ruefully observed a rising trout, and worked my way up

a narrow, rocky valley which cut into a sheer rock cliff. There was plenty of dark red stain all about. My earphones were adjusted and my counter was turned on.

Gaining the top I stood panting, speculating on the ravages of time in general and the unfitness of lawyering as a prelude to prospecting in



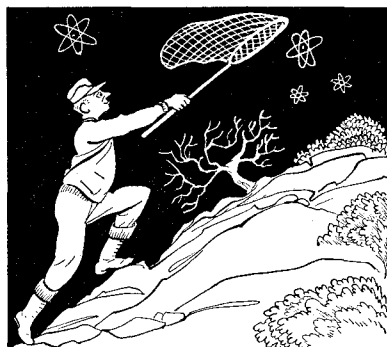
particular. I mopped the sweat off my face, batted a few more deer flies into oblivion, yearned for another beer, and leaned against a rocky ledge to rest. *Wham* went the needle on my counter, driving it off the dial. My earphones crackled so hard I had to whip them off. Just like popcorn.

"Whoops!" I shouted, wildly clawing away at the moss-grown rocky ledge. Russell and Comer appeared from nowhere, leaping over the rocks like mountain goats. "Ah youth," I thought. They pressed their counters against the ledge and their eyes grew wide with wonder. Wordlessly we reached out our hands in a three-way grip. At last we were in.

Prospecting is a madness as old as human curiosity and cupidity itself. Once caught in its feverish grip the victim has a grave tendency to forsake work, church, and community uplift; to forget wife, home, and children — even the payments on his car. This is the story of how one obscure country lawyer abandoned the drafting of ten-dollar wills and, staggering under the weight of a twelve-pound Geiger counter, wandered crazed throughout the countryside searching for radioactive minerals. How does one get that way?

My rock happiness was the result of a chain reaction that began in the autumn of 1948 when Bob Campbell of Toronto rediscovered Dr. LeConte's hundred-year-old "lost" pitchblende strike at Theano Point, some seventy-odd miles northwest of the Canadian Soo on the north shore

of Lake Superior. For years Canadians had been searching for it. All LeConte had left behind was a vague reference in an old scientific paper. Anyway, this was the first important uranium strike since the fabulous El Dorado on Great Bear Lake and



also the first since Canada had taken the official wraps off prospecting for fissionable minerals. The story broke in November, 1948, after Campbell filed his claims, and all of Ontario went mad overnight. Papers in the U.S. gave it front page treatment — along with the latest sex slaying.

For days I sat brooding among my lawbooks over the dime store in Ishpeming, huddled over mounds of Canadian and American papers and mining gazettes, itching to grab my Model A fish car and dart across the Canadian border and join in the wild staking rush. The first symptoms of the madness were upon me. Instead I sighed and stolidly drew another will. "I bequeath to my dear Aunt Minnie . . ."

Then came the clincher. My good friend and fellow townsman, geologist John McKee — "Long John" to his friends — was way up in the Ontario bush on an iron-ore prospect when the news of Campbell's strike broke. His nostrils immediately began to twitch, an occupational malady of your true prospector when a big rush is on. And, to make matters worse, he had two idle Geiger counters in camp. Finally he could stand it no longer. He broke camp and flagged the Algoma Central Railroad's mixed daily and headed south for the Soo with the two counters and two sturdy young Canadian assistants, Matt Richards and Jack Drury. In three days Matt Richards had discovered uranium near the little town of Frater on the rock-bound right-of-way of the Algoma Central Railway.

When McKee and the others finished telling me the story of the Fra-

ter strike the following Saturday night during a celebration party in Ishpeming, my nostrils began to twitch uncontrollably.

"Look, Matt," McKee said, pointing at me. "Voelker's gone as radioactive as a two-dollar watch."

"With a luminous dial," Richards added, confirming the diagnosis.

The very next day I started stalking Geiger counters and, despite the early snow, finally ordered a sleek 230-dollar model. It arrived in the midst of a three-day blizzard, so I was obliged to spend the winter mystifying my friends by Geigerizing the luminous dials on their watches and clocks. Thorium-coated gasoline lamp mantles were also usually good for a laugh. My best bet, however, was a large work of commercial art which displayed a lady in a rather extensive state of dishabille. By concentrating dabs of invisible radioactive material at strategic points on her anatomy my trusty Geiger and I were the life of many a party that long winter. I also used up two sets of batteries at 23 bucks a throw.

But not all was gaiety and fun. All winter long I crammed on uranium and uranium prospecting, subscribed for Canadian mining gazettes, and waded through endless handbooks, pamphlets, and brochures on the subject.

March came, and I went to Toronto with McKee and Comer to attend the annual Prospectors' Convention. I haunted every session and took bushels of notes. I also met and talked an arm off Bob Campbell, the hero of Theano Point, and kindly old Dr. Spence, one of the real pioneers of radioactive minerals in Canada. I was even made, of all things, an Honorary Prospector. A generous supply of Scotch providing bait, our hotel rooms were kept crammed day and night with uranium prospectors, the name of every other one of which, oddly enough, seemed to be Sandy. All the others were called Angus.

I came home so laden with radioactivity that I even brazenly wrote a popular science article on uranium — from which, I must report, shoals of magazines promptly recoiled in horror.

Spring finally came, and so advanced was my malady that on the opening day of trout season Frank Russell and I went Geigerizing instead! (For in the meantime I had inoculated poor Frank with the same virus.) Comer and his jeep arrived in June,

and on our first day out we made our big strike. Now back to that.

Weak with excitement we lay huddled there against the strike, happily buzzing our counters and dreaming the dreamy dreams that come so seldom in any prospector's life. First, there was the \$10,000 reward offered by the Atomic Energy Commission.

"That's 3333 bucks apiece," Russell mused.

"And 33½ cents," I added, conscious of my grave new legal responsibilities.

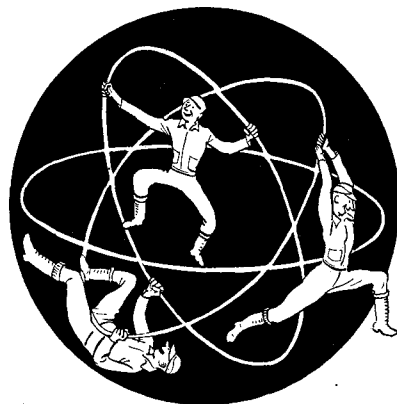
"Let's get an assay first," said Comer, our new chief geologist.

"I wonder who owns the land," Russell pertinently remarked.

"Hm. . . Trout fishing in the winter in the Mexican mountains," I murmured.

What more could men ask out of life? Here we were, doing what we liked best to do, getting fabulously rich doing it, and being blazing patriots into the bargain.

The days that followed were crammed with excitement and hard work. First we had to run the lines to determine the precise boundaries of the land and the ownership. (Scarcely a day passed that one of us did not sneak away and snuggle up against our strike, earphones adjusted, and listen beatifically to the heavenly music of our bonanza.) Luck was running with us: the land belonged to the State of Michigan as reverted tax lands. But one could not stake claims in Michigan as in Canada. Then came a further stroke of luck. The state suddenly revised its land policy to permit long-term preferential roy-



alty leases to persons finding fissionable ores on public lands. Voelker reluctantly visited his dusty law office long enough to prepare and dispatch an application for a lease with the state.

More luck came our way. Two state mineralogists and a professor

of geology from Michigan State College happened to be in the vicinity. Under solemn vows of secrecy we rushed them out to the strike, and their visible excitement almost had me ordering a Cadillac roadster.

Luck, luck, luck — how it dogged us! The next day a field geologist of the raw materials division of the Atomic Energy Commission blew into town. All of us — including the assorted mineralogists of the day before — again made a flying-wedge trip down to our strike. As we waded across the trout stream, Voelker in the lead turned and sagely said, "Please separate and walk in the brush, men. You know — don't want to make an obvious path till we get our lease."

The young AEC geologist quivered with excitement. The way he hacked away at our strike with his prospector's pick and stashed the stuff away into little canvas bags made us yearn to restrain him before our mine disappeared under our very eyes. Comer and Russell glanced appealingly at their new chief counsel.

"Er — look," I said. "What're you figuring to do with all that stuff?"

"Why, fly it on to our New York laboratory for assay," he replied. "These are the hottest-looking rocks I've run into since I left the carnotite fields out West."

"Of course. Let's give him a hand, boys," I said, and we all fell to, filling up little canvas bags with our lovely rocks.

We parted that night at the Mather Inn. "I'll keep in touch with the home office

and phone you boys when I learn the result," the AEC geologist promised us.

The days that followed were a nightmare of waiting and hoping, of alternate wild enthusiasm and black despair. Comer and I had almost manually to restrain Russell from going out and philanthropically buying up all the private land for miles around our strike. "Wait for the assay," Comer insisted. It had become a sort of litany. And we practically slept together so that we wouldn't be separated when the fatal word came.

It came in eight days. The three Geiger boys were having a quiet beer in my kitchen. The AEC geologist was on the phone.

"I'm fine, how are you?" I said.

"Sorry about the slight delay — but I have just got word from New York."

"What is it?"

"Thorium."

"Thorium?"

"Thorium. Now let me explain about thorium."

"Please, not now. I've studied all winter about thorium. About all it's good for at present is that campers use it in gasoline mantles. Thanks awfully, though."

Do you know anyone who wants to buy three used Geiger counters? Not that we're downhearted. Because we're buying a new gadget — the latest thing in uranium detectors, a Canadian scintillometer. You see, among other things, it tells the difference between uranium and thorium — not in eight harrowing days, but immediately.



THE MOSQUITO

by WINSTEAD SMITH

I RAISED my hand to swat the resting mosquito; but death is death, no matter on whom it fall.
"God," I asked, "though she isn't your least creature, she's little enough. Shall I squash her on the wall?"

I waited and kept my awful hand poised there, but nobody answered. I was weighing my right to wreck the best-laid plans of mosquitoes when, suddenly noisy, she was gone — and later bit me on the neck.

Not questioning God, but only doing His bidding, that degenerate fly raised a tiny itchy tumor.
I'd swat her quick, if I knew where she is hidden; but the joke's on me and is likely divine humor.



FOR WHOM THE BELL CLANKS

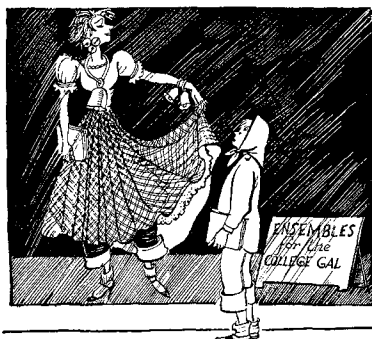
by ANN GRIFFITH

ANN GRIFFITH is writing in New York. Readers of these pages will recall her little survey of advertising by comic strip which appeared in our July issue last year.

FIVE of our leading fashion magazines dedicate their August issues each year to the American College Girl — or Gal, as she is usually called. These magazines fear that the freshman who arrives On Campus without the proper wardrobe may be jeopardizing her whole college career. Furthermore, says one of them, "if you look good, and know you look good, even American History takes on a new fascination." But, while the College Issues agree on the importance of looking good, their formulas for doing so vary considerably. In fact, the five magazines frequently go riding off in all directions on the most vital Fashion Questions.

Following the exuberant advice of any one of them is in itself a breathless undertaking. "Let your hair grow thicker, fuller; let it swing like a short silk tassel. Go gaga on color on a big evening — orange velvet with pink tulle, a red carnation with orange velveteen. Get a little Spanish color into your life. Pick Jersey that's ribbed like the lisle stockings your mother wore to grade school. It's chic to unbutton the cuffs of your jacket and roll them back, so that you appear to be growing too fast for your suit. Shorten every sleeve, some to four or more inches above the wrist-bone." This is only the beginning of one editor's formula, but already the reader must be hopelessly behind, what with sewing up all those sleeves and rummaging through Mother's trunks in search of an old stocking for comparison purposes.

In spite of her heady, confident prose, that particular editor is not above the undignified squabbling that goes on in the pages of the College Issues. Two of her competitors came out strongly for the "trouser-straight,



pencil-slim skirt" and the "direct, uncluttered line." She promptly sabotaged them with this recommendation: "To give ease and action to a narrow skirt, a checked red and wine tweed apron, cut on the bias and beautifully bulky, with a cowbell clanking at one side." Instead of the usual bats, she seems to have bells in her belfry, for she told her readers: "Hang a bell in your ear, on your belt, around your neck, clip a cowbell at your waist, and Ring the Bell at College." To this, a rival coolly replied, "The incoming frosh is urged not to wear cowbells in her ears."

Wrapping its models in plaid coats, suits, and dresses, one magazine called for "plaids and more plaids and more plaids!" Another answered softly, "Plaids are most pertinent where they are unlikely: plaid shoes, plaid gloves, plaid hat . . ." In this case, however, the reader should not have any difficulty in deciding which magazine to follow. The models displaying the unlikely plaids look pertinent enough, but they are posed all alone, whereas the gals covered with plaids have attracted scores of College Men who lounge around the edges and in the backgrounds of their pictures.

One of the hottest controversies concerns the question of Separates. ("Separates" is the fashion-language word for the skirts and shirts that every girl has been wearing since the age of seven.) Four of the magazines are sharply divided as to whether the top and bottom should match or not. Two say they should, "for the neater, newer look." Two say that "helter-skelter" is much more fun. The fifth — the same one that took the cautious line on plaids — dodges the issue, hiding behind such inconclu-

sive phrases as "skirts-and-shirts can be undoubtedly as elegant as any understatement made" and explaining rather loftily that the elegance is a matter "of your ability to put one and one together (with a good belt) and get a clear, crisp, authoritative costume."

If there is little agreement among the magazines on *how* a girl should look good, there is no agreement at all on what she should look *like*. One of them announced, "This is the moment of the Grand Gesture, by the women to the men. After years of admiring now and again (a pink shirt here, a sweater there) this year we fall completely for everything he wears. His Chesterfield, his Oxford flannels, his odd tweed jacket, his hats. . . . This fall, the trend is stronger than ever." In order to "borrow from the boys," the entire editorial staff of this magazine "invaded such sacrosanct strongholds as Yale, Princeton and other male campuses" and brought back everything from "his key-chain," which they made into a "jangle-dangle necklace," to, apparently, his scalp, which they made into "Crew Cut Fabrics . . . the furry, glossy brush of the boys' crew cut heads."

Meanwhile, another magazine was announcing that "suits grow more ladylike all the time." Still another liked the idea of borrowing from the boys, but found Yale and Princeton too sacrosanct, and timidly stuck to the public domain with an "English Schoolboy's Jacket — lifted off the back of Henry James' precocious youngster in *The Innocents*." How is American History going to take on a new fascination if the incoming frosh does not know whether she is supposed to look like a college boy, a lady, or a Jamesian youngster?

Those editors who scoured various male campuses for His fashions to translate into Her terms did not, unfortunately, confine their scavenging to institutions of learning. A gal who followed their advice would find herself setting out for college attired in a "Convoy coat, originally worn by the British Navy," which "recently made its appearance in *The Third Man*," plus "a hat that comes straight off the polo field" and "a suit suggesting men's semi-formal morning clothes." Her shoes would be "a shameless steal from our favorite men on campus," and she would be carrying "a concierge umbrella, exactly like a French doorman's,"

and "a campus slicker copied from New York's most distinguished doorman, at the Plaza." The editors claimed that the boys "cheered when they saw these clothes," but that seems highly unlikely, especially if the wearer had shortened every sleeve so that her wrists were dangling four inches below her cuffs.

In addition to these excesses, disagreements, and bickerings, the College Issues are guilty of tossing out irresponsible statements which further upset the already confused Fashion Picture. "Commonsense fashions have a way of spreading from East to West or West to East," said one of them, and it is common knowledge that this statement has had a paralyzing effect on the flow of fashion. Girls on Eastern campuses don't know whether to copy girls on Western campuses, or whether the Western girls should be copying them. And vice versa. While there is still some spreading from North to South, no fashions are moving at all between East and West, in either direction.

It is inevitable that the Big Five will lose the confidence, and the subscriptions, of all gals everywhere if these contradictions and confusions continue. Some sort of Self-Regulating Self-Censoring Central Committee must be set up to arbitrate disputes and to impose minimum standards of clarity and responsibility. Let us hope that the 1951 College Issues will show, by presenting a more united, less quarrelsome front, that action along these lines has been started.



WE LOVED OUR KITTY

by DONALD C. BABCOCK

BLACK Elijah's gone away
To lay him down alone,
On a sullen, sultry day,
Fevered to the bone.

'Lijah got his Bible name
When he cooled his fur
Underneath the thicket-frame
Of the juniper.

On his belly and his throat,
Thrice, with fingers light,

ACCENT ON LIVING

Some stray gene had touched his coat
With a wisp of white.

'Lijah was a gentle soul,
Unprepared to pay
Dark distemper's heavy toll
On that August day.

But this evening, in the wood,
In the snowdrift dunes,
I saw — 'Lijah? There he stood
With eyes like yellow moons.

When I called he ran to me,
Nothing wild or shy.
Feline personality
Looked me in the eye.

"Have you," asked I, "spots of white?
Is it you?" He said:
"Look too close, in faith's despite,
And you may prove me dead.

"There are moments when to pry
Is the greater pity.
'Lijah may indeed be I,
And I your neighbor's kitty.

"Do not think, and do not ask.
Hold me while I purr.
What was 'Lijah but a mask
Whose features fade and blur?

"Could Elisha surely tell
Who he still might be
When Elijah's mantle fell
On his identity?

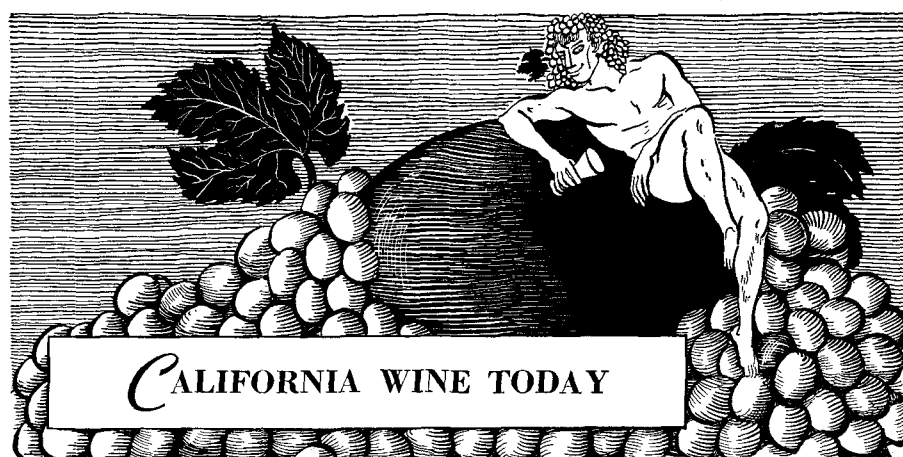
"You should know, though you are
man,
Selfhood hinges not
On the facts you once could scan,
But time can blend and blot."

So I set him on his feet,
And so he left me there,
Stepping dainty, treading neat,
Walking on the air.

Far beyond our feeble call
'Lijah's gone away.
Yet some fourth dimensional
Gave him back today.

He, for all I'll ever ween,
Consorts with gnome and elf,
Heedless quite how that could mean
He transcends himself.

Black Elijah's gone away:
So has Merlin gone.
Both, for all that I can say,
Are piping up the dawn.



by WILLIAM WISTER HAINES

WILLIAM WISTER HAINES, the author and playwright, is a Californian by adoption who has long enjoyed the native wines. At the suggestion of the Editor, he made an extended trip through California vineyards last winter, and this is his account of what he learned. Mr. Haines has had three novels published under the Atlantic-Little, Brown imprint, and his play *Command Decision* was a smash hit on Broadway and in the film version.

CALIFORNIA'S vintners of today could answer Omar simply. They are buying land, equipment, and research to produce better wine.

The vine has been man's immemorial companion, sustenance to his blood, stimulus to the fancy that lifts him above other animals. Genesis records a vineyard as Noah's first planting. In belated recompense the vine itself has recently offered some corroboration of Noah.

Almost within the shadow of Ararat, Professor H. P. Olmo, University of California geneticist, discovered in 1948 wild growth of *Vitis vinifera*, parent species of the vine from whose grapes is pressed nine tenths of the world's wine.

It was known that *Vinifera* had accompanied man from Greece through every step of his long trek up the Mediterranean coast into Europe and so across to the New World. Dr. Olmo's discovery, however, confirms an older origin and suggests a new perspective. It testifies that California wines are not the misplaced stepchildren of Europe, doomed by geographical mystique to an imitative inferiority in the New World. They are, like their European forebears, direct descendants of an Asiatic vine, transplanted to alien soil and climate, transmuted by technology to the uses of native culture.

Vinifera entered California with the first white men shortly before the

American Revolution. The Franciscan missionaries brought it for sacramental use. The success of the Cross with the relatively humble Mission grape spurred both husbandry and commerce. Other subspecies of *Vinifera* followed by clipper ship and prairie schooner. By the late 1820s wine was in commercial production and had begun the adventures it continues today with American culture.

Wine had an early taste of the get-rich-quick mania which dogs its history in the U. S. The California gold rush, closely followed by the phylloxera scourge which decimated Europe's vineyards, touched off speculation on a boom-and-bust scale. Men were ruined; *Vinifera* kept growing.

Wine had a prophetically rude introduction to our politics. In 1860 the state sent its most illustrious vintner, Colonel Haraszthy, back to Europe to gather additional subspecies of *Vinifera* for experiment with California soil and climate. He brought back over 100,000 choice cuttings, carefully catalogued, only to have the state repudiate his bills.

Haraszthy's reward was personal ruin. His cuttings had to be sold piecemeal. Classifications disappeared; his treasures were dispersed, often through ignorant hands, to unsuitable soil. Experts are still untangling the resultant confusion of detail. But the broad consequence was to give California the richest profusion of species ever grown under one flag.

Immigration brought the state both the technology of producing wine and a blood stream which loved it. From the beginnings — as now — the Latinity of the great names in California wine has been striking. Legend of northern man as a somber fellow, requiring at least 100 proof spirits to lift his own, rests more on accident than on choice. His climate will not grow wine. Given a chance, he learns

fast. One of California's great houses was founded by a Finn, another by a German. Haraszthy himself was a Hungarian. California offered not only vintners but a consuming populace with wine in its blood.

With the state's soil and climate *Vinifera* was not, as first feared, fickle.



It was exacting. It played expensive jokes on the pomposity that hoped to press good wine by brute force of new gold on ornamental acres. To the intuition which could unriddle the complex equation of vine, soil, sunlight, and rainfall it yielded wine of immediate excellence and exciting portent.

Nor was the state always inimical. Here no royal smile or noble patronage accelerated the quest for perfection. But here in 1880 the State Legislature voted, and this time paid, public funds to begin the study of the grape in its university.

In wine production as in the cultures it blesses, stability and continuity are factors. These the new land had not. A hectare of choice European vineyard may represent generations of privation, current affluence, and the sole prospect of a family. Here gold itself, timber, wheat, fruit, and oil beckoned to impatience from every horizon. Haraszthy himself plunged into half a dozen enterprises. Only today, under capital made elsewhere, are his acres being reclaimed to their happiest potential.

Nearly every vineyard in the state has known many owners. History shows an unhappy pattern of promising beginnings and then a change of interest in legatee or purchaser. The exceptions illuminate the phenomenon. It is no accident that the rare third and fourth generation houses produce such a high percentage of today's best wine.

At worst, however, individual change merely postponed development of specific vineyards. Our national instability arrested all progress. The disaster of prohibition injured *Vinifera* not at all. It had withered before, notably with the Mohammedan

incursion into Persia, only to bloom the more brightly elsewhere.

For California wine the blow was catastrophic. Select vineyards were ripped out for replanting to more productive grapes. Roughly a quarter of the state's four hundred vintners survived on faith, raisins, table grapes, and the limited sacramental wine business. None of these markets demanded, none could support, the efforts prerequisite to better wine. One must mourn not only the vintages not grown but the lessons not learned. Unused soil lies fallow. Unused skills atrophy.

Repeal posed for the California vintner no new production problem. Soil and climate had been proved. Technology, only dormant, awoke to significant advances in refrigeration. The challenge lay, once again, in *Vinifera*'s adaptation to American culture.

The vintner shares not only the normal hazards of other farmers. Where their troubles end in warehouse or subsidy, his begin as merchandiser of a delicacy bearing his name on every bottle. He operates under rigid government control. No parity protects him, no dollar of the taxpayer's money has ever been paid for not growing wine. It is not only taxed; its commerce is regulated under forty-odd sets of laws.

Beyond these obstacles waited the American consumer with American impatience. Yet good wine will not hurry. He is a lucky vintner who drinks from his vines within four years of planting. The best takes longer. Technology may suggest, only time proves, the right grape for the right acre. Only patient aging in wood and glass confirms the choice.

With repeal there was no time. Customers who could remember that California wine had once sold on a proudly competitive basis in Europe itself were eager. A generation that had trained its taste buds on bathtub gin waited with its tongue out.

For the new gold rush there was a woefully inadequate backlog of good wine. Opportunism shipped whatever it could press. Vintners of conscience, both old and new, who were planting mightily for the rewards of a decade later had to watch the name of California wine compromised by fluids unfit to pour on fighting dogs.

There may have been rough justice in an industry outraged by the nation returning outrage upon the nation, but the effect was evil. Acting rap-

idly, the responsible growers formed an energetic trade organization, enacted basic standards into state law, and projected that, through federal statute, to govern California wine wherever sold.

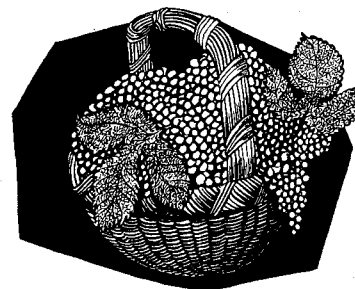
A lasting mischief, however, had been done. Europe had watched *Vinifera*'s resurrection here with wise apprehension. Propaganda was already attuned to the snob appeal inherent in the word *imported*. Now it could exploit even disinterested pronouncements unhappily true of much of the initial spate.

California wine was scarcely luckier in some of its friends. New as well as forgetful customers had much to learn; for a time self-appointed teachers arose from under every other typewriter.

Inexperience was bullied with dogma on ritual and the permissible combinations of wine and food. It was beguiled with some of the purplest prose that ever dripped. The correct tastes of wine, sometimes the same wine, were declared to be: "gravelly, suave, flinty, robust, delicate, full-bodied, sprightly, rounded, angular, aromatic and tranquil." Metaphors ranged recklessly from the firmament through flowers and precious stones.

Apart from snobbery and semantics there was a formidable problem of nomenclature. Here California, like Africa, Australia, and South America, leaned heavily on European precedent. The generic names such as Burgundy, Claret, Sauternes, and Rhine wine were universal landmarks.

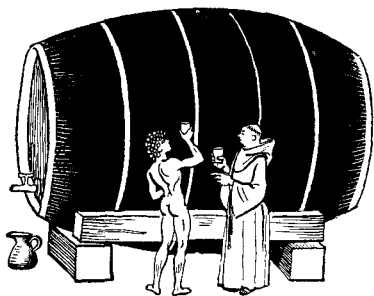
They had become so because in Europe, as elsewhere, they conveniently embraced the wide variations within recognizable types. All but the rarest are blends, of a quality deter-



mined by choice of grape and the vintner's art. But just as Europe depends, for the bulk of them, on strong infusions from the mass production of the Midi and Algeria, so California had, and too often misused, the press of its regions most notable for productivity.

Innocence, confronting on the same

shelf a California Burgundy at 39 cents and a California Burgundy at \$1.50, had not yet learned that the



vintner's name is the most important print on a label.

Worse, large sections of the country never saw California's better wines. For even as time increased their flow, merchandising and legal barriers multiplied. For the smaller wineries, which bottle an inverse proportion of the best, promotion on the scale America has geared to mass production was prohibitive. The annual cost of a single salesman would consume the profit on something between five and ten thousand cases of wine. Many prizes at the latest state fair went to gallonages under a thousand. Even today much of the state's best wine never crosses its boundaries.

Again, good hotels and restaurants seldom expect more than double the cost of wine over the table. A \$2.50 bottle of gin and a few pennies' worth of vermouth can be diluted into \$15 worth of Martinis. For the professional host, too, there was more than arithmetic to learn. The wiser have learned that good wine is not only a strong attraction in itself; it is magically ameliorative to even the best cooking.

Freight rates handicap quality wine, which must still be bottled at the winery. Half of a case's 30-odd pounds is glass which pays premiums for breakability. European and Algerian wine cross the Atlantic more cheaply than California's best crosses the continent.

Technology could answer this problem already by safe shipment of even the best in bulk for Eastern bottling and binning, as winery-aging in glass is called. But the smaller vintner has not yet found the cost answer to rigid control of such important steps at such a distance. Association with the increasing numbers of his kind should discover a solution.

Only two states retain absolute prohibition, but the other forty-six burden wine with as many sets of laws

and taxes. Eleven cling to the state store system, which means that employees choose what the taxpayer may consider.

One small vintner of high quality and limited distribution already files eight legal reports a month, adding ruefully: "A check accompanies most of them." For many another, paper work alone erects proscriptive boundaries.

Through all these difficulties the California vintners of today press an increasing flow of better wine for one primary reason: Americans want it. The question of wine's adaptation to American culture has been answered by a steadily rising demand.

Taste is subjective. To pronounce wine better is to express the conviction of a single palate. Yet for the reason as well as for the tongue there is impressive testimony of improvement.

The grape is already California's second crop. Appropriately expanded, the Departments of Viticulture and Enology at the State University's College of Agriculture at Davis have mapped every significant region of the state. They have measured (heat) degree-days and rainfall, planted, pressed, analyzed, and tasted the product. The aim was to confirm optimum combination of individual grape and certain location.

Major regional potentialities are proved. The optimism and obstinacy that once embarrassed the market with ill-conceived wine must face not only the facts but their competitive fruit. The exciting search for still better conditions, within known probability, narrows into the sights of surer knowledge.

The incursion of the great distillers into winegrowing first met sharp skepticism. Fine wine by mass production seemed a self-evident anomaly. It may remain one, but skepticism is learning that one swallow does not make a sage.

In wine production as elsewhere, survival is the first law. The grower must live; he must profit before he improves. The most illustrious wineries always marketed several grades

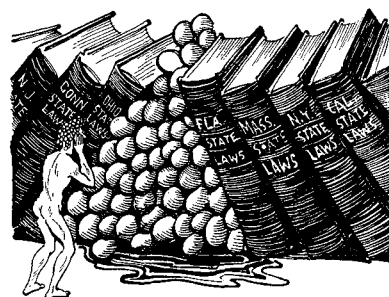


of wine, scrupulously distinguished by price and label. Most still do.

But in precisely the lowest-price field, which the great corporations first invaded, opportunism and anarchic competition reigned. Heavy investment in a continuing name has to look forward. The giants never pretended to sell first-run cask and bottle aged Pinot Chardonnay at 69 cents a time. But they knew that their futures depended on whether a customer with 69 cents to spend on honest white table wine would return to their labels. Today he does.

There is a story, perhaps apocryphal but apt. When the first love-nest and hatchet-murder tabloid set its type for a new reading public the venerable New York *Times* was asked for comment on such competition. It gravely declined. To the same question six months later the *Times* replied cheerfully. Its own circulation had substantially increased.

But, perhaps because all parallels are said to meet in infinity, the story



is not ended. The big corporations concentrated first on dessert wines because their grapes and growing requisites best fit mass production. Muscatel, Angelica, Tokay, and the Ports had a strong appeal to the national sweet tooth. Their higher alcoholic content reassured the prohibition generation, which liked to feel its bridge-work bend with every sip. These wines still outsell the lighter ones by about four to one.

Yet the country which leads the world in per capita sugar consumption has made the dry Martini its favorite cocktail. Expanding steadily, many of the giants are now aiming their resources toward the profits and prestige of the most selective growths.

In the latest judgments at the California State Fair the biggest companies won not only their usual hatful of awards in the dessert and more modest table wine classes: they won respectable prizes in generics. After that they carried off an honorable mention in Pinot Noir, a silver medal

...the gold
...Zinfandel.
...at least one communicable stand-
ard distinguishes what are called the
better wines: they command higher
prices. Snobbery and semantics still
vex this field but an important step in
nomenclature now assists individual
judgment of its offerings. The varie-
tal label is not new. Haraszthy sold
the press of his Zinfandel grapes as
Zinfandel wine ninety years ago. And
there are records of California Black
Pinot in the early 1860s.

The increasing adoption of varietal
labels today sharpens identification.



Merit in wine begins with the grape
pressed. Law specifies that a vintner
who wishes to demark his better
Claret as Cabernet Sauvignon or his
better Sauternes as Semillon must
blend into them at least 51 per cent
of the press of those dearer grapes.

Competition drives the percentage
steadily upward from the legal mini-
mum. It assures the customer that
the vintner who began with superior
grapes has processed and aged their
wine with proportionate care.

Some excellent houses still refuse
the varietal label for reasons not al-
ways so simple as heavy commitment
in cheaper vines. Their blending prac-
tices have won customer confidence in
their generic labels. And some houses
have put time and scruple into pro-
prietary house names.

Nevertheless varietal labeling,
strongly encouraged by the College of
Agriculture, increases. The curious
may test its efficacy. State prices
differ, but for less than \$3 — far less
where half bottles are procurable — a
reputable wine merchant will sell one
bottle of good grade California Bur-
gundy and one of Pinot Noir. Or a
California Sauterne, sweet or dry,
may be matched against its counter-
part in Semillon.

The trend toward varietal labeling
is emphasized in the recent formation
of an Association of Chateau Wine

Grocers by a number of relatively
small vintners. Its members have
agreed that their varietals shall con-
tain not less than 85 per cent of the
grape that labels them.

This innovation has met doubt as
well as enthusiasm. Many consider
its very name inappropriate to wine of
the Western world. Members as well
as observers know that its gallonage
will be relatively small. Bad years
will force it either to lower percentage
or to break commercial continuity.
It is a step, however, toward still
higher standards which impartiality
should watch with hope.

Among the better wines vintage
labeling increases. It is not universal
and still entails difficulty. The myth
that all years are vintage years in
California has boomeranged on qual-
ity vintners.

There was some foundation for the
legend. The Californian has seldom
had to follow the European practice
of picking an insufficiently sunned
grape to save it from frost. In the
lower common denominators of both
grapes and wine this is enormously
advantageous. Nine tenths of the
state's planting, like that of Europe,
is candidly intended to be consumed
within the year of its harvest.

But here as elsewhere the more
select grapes experience wide annual
differences of both productivity and
quality. There are still years when
the scrupulous vintner blends his best
grapes into medium grades.

As in the varietal-generic contro-
versy, there are reputable houses
justly proud of blending practices
which include combining presses of
different years. Art and experience
give their wines a high uniformity.
They consider the vintage label not
worth the legal condition which re-
quires 100 per cent of the press of the
specified year.

For the casual customer, however,
as well as for the sophisticate's cellar
book, vintage labeling offers solid ad-
vantages. Barring mishandling of in-
dividual bottles, Doe's Cabernet Sau-
vignon 1946, better or not than his
1947, will always be the same wine.
The important exception to this rule
works also to the customer's benefit.

Date is a clue toward the condition

*To readers who are interested, the
Atlantic will be happy to send free of
charge a recommended list of red and
white California wines. Address your
request to "Accent on Living," The
Atlantic Monthly, 8 Arlington Street,
Boston, Massachusetts.*

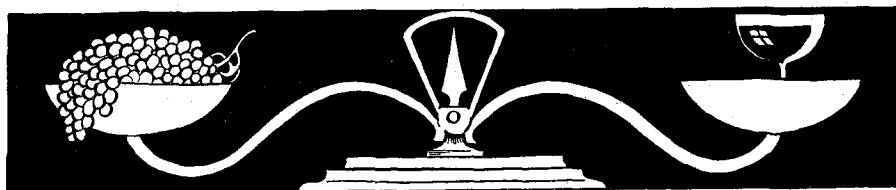
of the wine. No reputable vintner
sells any quality wine until, after ap-
propriate binning in his own ware-
house, it is ready to be consumed.
But commercial necessity still releases
much wine which will improve enor-
mously during further aging by mer-
chant or purchaser. Generalization in
such a ramified subject is dangerous.
One limited experience, however,
strongly endorses preponderant opin-
ion that while California's better reds
improve up to at least ten years, the
whites reach their peak at five or six.

It is as pointless to dispute about
California and European wines as
about the weather here and abroad.
Both have many varieties; both have
suffered from chauvinism and men-
dacity.

No responsible California vintner
asserts that he can yet match the
highest European development of cer-
tain wines. He is a rare American who
will ever taste those wines. They are
grown in infinitesimal quantity. The
dribble of that which reaches America
is bespoken in advance at prices rang-
ing upward from about triple Cali-
fornia's best.

Ranging downward from those in-
visible peaks Europe offers a gamut
from the reliable, always costly, to the
wholesale dumpings of Algerian dregs.
The latter offer only the witch word
imported, to sustain their clamant ap-
peal as bargains. Their true value is
educational: as cheap lessons in the
principle of something for nothing.

Variety remains one of the great
charms of wine as taste remains sub-
jective. Consumer taste has created a
rising demand for California wine. It
supports the vintner's confidence that
except at the aforementioned peaks
his product rewards comparison with
anything the world offers. It under-
writes the planting and the planning
which aim still higher.





A trooper of The Life Guards on duty in Whitehall—part of London's daily pageantry.

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